

TOP STORY: Put people first in the Balkans

November 30–December 13, 1992

NEW

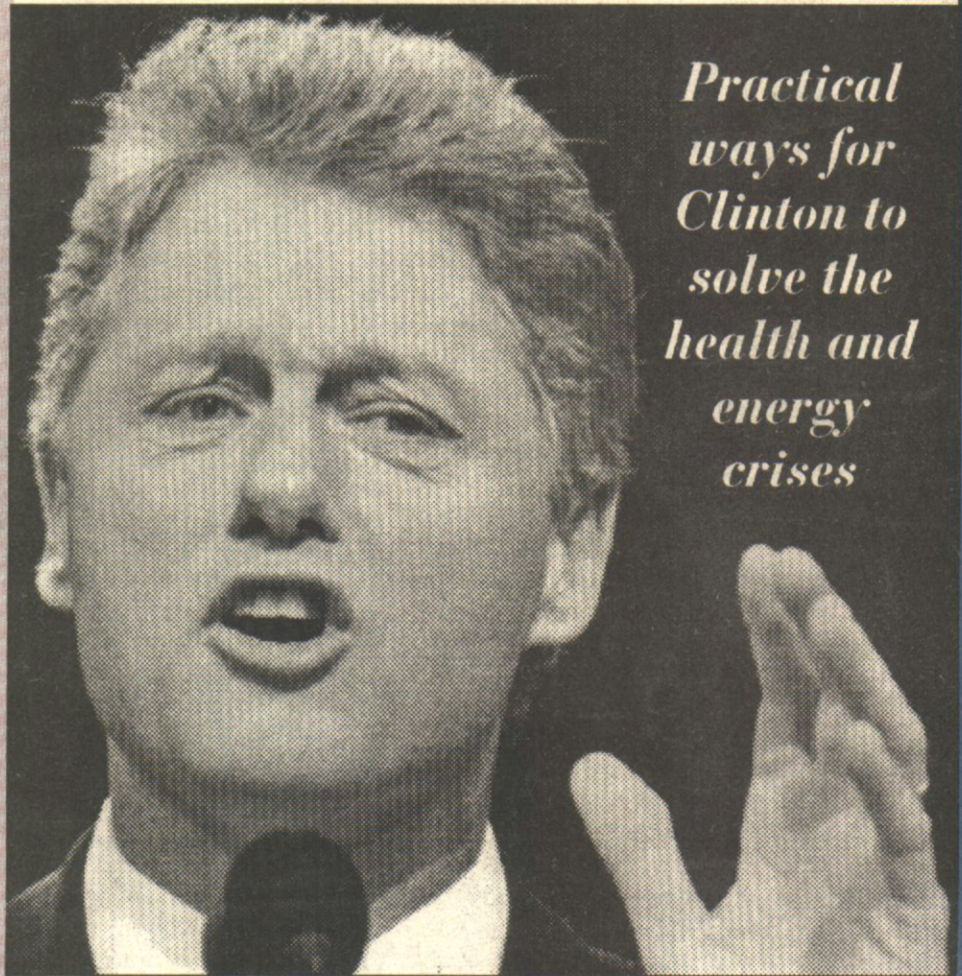
IN THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

“Francis Ford Coppola must not have noticed that even among the Undead this is the year of the woman.”

PAGE 32

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Practical ways for Clinton to solve the health and energy crises

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

JOHN B. JUDIS

EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO THE NEW *IN THESE TIMES*

Consider our metamorphosis a coming of age. Sixteen years ago this month, we emerged as a new kid on the block. Now, having seen too many of our peers fall by the wayside during the Reagan years, we enter the era of post-Cold War politics with a new look and a new resolve.

We know that, at first, readers usually don't like drastic changes of format in their publications. But we're confident that even if you are now less than thrilled, you'll soon come to love our new look.

The change is more than cosmetic. It is designed to help us meet the challenge of new opportunities created by the election of a president and new members of Congress committed to a reordering of government priorities. We do not think that the American people expect their newly elected officials to solve all of the pressing social problems facing the nation. But they do expect their government to help create well-paid jobs, to provide for universal quality health care, to encourage the development of new industries, to save the public education system—from preschools through higher education—and to end the rapid acceleration of environmental degradation.

That's a tall order. There will be much confusion—and a good deal of obfuscation on the part of government officials and the commercial media—about how all this should be done. That's where *In These Times* comes in. We intend to monitor these developments. We will look at the new administration's programs to see whether they are consistent with campaign promises. And we will assess who these programs benefit and who must pay for them.

To help create a well-informed, active citizenry *In These Times* will have to be more accessible and more attractive. That's why we moved to this new design. Our makeover will not change our principles. But we believe that it will enable us to do our job better, to reach more people and to help them more clearly understand their country and their world.

THE PERILS OF PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Like millions of other Americans, we were more appalled than surprised at the Supreme Court's ruling two weeks ago that upheld an employer's right to cut health insurance benefits of employees who develop costly illness-

es. This is a decision right out of *Catch-22*. While it would be laughable in a novel, in real life it is deadly. Literally.

In a decision that the American Medical Association's chairman described as "a green light for employers to change coverage for any serious illness," the Court refused to review a lower court decision allowing a Houston company to virtually eliminate benefits of an employee, John McGann, after he contracted AIDS. The federal Employee Retirement

Income Security Act bars interfering with benefits to which employees are entitled, but the company was able to slip through a loophole that exempts self-insured employers from this provision.

Supporting the company before the Court, U.S. Solicitor General Kenneth Starr argued that the employer was motivated by a lawful desire "to avoid the expense of paying for AIDS treatment." In other words, Starr claimed, insurance was OK unless it cost the insurer too much.

In any other contractual relationship this attempt to avoid payment would be considered a breach of contract—or, if the employer never intended to pay, it would be fraud. But the Bush administration took the side of profit over human need, and the Court agreed to go along.

At *In These Times*, we know from our own experience that health insurance is a burden, particularly on small employers like the Houston company. Only this month, our own health insurance premium has been raised from \$44,000 to \$77,000 because one of our employees required substantial medical care over the past year. The insurance company says it is paying out more than we are paying in, and that it cannot afford to continue the old rate. And that assertion might be true, if the payments we have made over the past several years—when payments far exceeded benefits—were not included in the calculations.

But right or wrong, we are in a similar, if less painful, position than McGann. We are being punished for using the benefits for which we contracted. We are, in effect, being made to pay the cost of the benefits we receive—much as if we had no insurance at all.

In our book, that's a con game, and it should be ended by replacing the system of private insurance for profit by a system in which all Americans are covered by a single payer that spreads the risk across our entire population. ◀

Health insurance is increasingly like a con game in which benefits last just until you need them.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESE TIMES

Volume 17, Number 1



Opportunity knocks for Bill Clinton

Responsible strategies for successful governing.

JOHN B. JUDIS • 14



Capitalist China

It's their Party and they'll buy if they want to.

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Put people first in the Balkans

How to emerge from the quagmire.

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LETTERS

Diversity in many tongues

Authors normally don't complain about laudatory reviews. Yet I cannot leave unchallenged a review that misstates the central idea of my book *Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of "English Only."* Ilan Stavans (*ITT*, Oct. 14) attributes to me the very viewpoint I criticize throughout—that “unilingualism is ... our only hope of managing diversity without disintegration.”

This argument sounds innocent enough. Yet it has become a mainstay of the xenophobic, paranoid, mean-spirited movement to declare English the official U.S. language. It conveys the message that English, “our common bond” as a nation, is suddenly “threatened” and that laws are needed to restrict the use of other tongues. (In fact, census figures show that immigrants today are adopting English

more rapidly than ever before.) Finally, it portrays an ethnocentric vision of U.S. history, obscuring a tradition of multilingualism stretching back to the colonial era.

Contrary to Stavans' assertion, I argue that “English only” has rarely been a popular cause or a nationalist symbol in the past. During the 1800s, a dozen states and territories passed laws authorizing bilingual public education, and elsewhere localities offered it unofficially in such languages as German, French, Spanish, Norwegian and Cherokee. Not until the turn of this century—a period of intense nativism not unlike our own—was an ideological link forged between “English” and “Americanism.”

Today the “unilingual” mentality has inspired attempts to curtail bilingual education, Spanish-language advertising, Chinese business signs, even 911 operators in minority tongues. It has polarized communities

along ethnic and racial lines. And it continues to threaten the civil rights of millions whose English is limited.

I am especially perplexed by Stavans' conclusion that I am “careful not to encourage multilingualism.” He apparently dozed through a major section of the book in which I advocate the philosophy of “English plus.” To wit: while English skills are necessary in the United States (no controversy there), they are not sufficient. Monolingualism is an increasing handicap in the modern world. Rather than banning or stigmatizing the languages of immigrants and Native Americans, we should treat them as resources that could benefit the country both culturally and economically. Toward that end, I favor bilingual education programs that develop children's mother-tongue skills rather than discard them through a single-minded emphasis on English.

James Crawford
Washington D.C.

No health friend

John B. Judis grossly distorts the implications of Bill Clinton's health policy (*ITT*, Oct. 28). The managed competition strategy would force most Americans into cut-rate health maintenance organizations (HMOs) chosen for them by their employer, and owned by insurance companies. Far from confronting the insurance industry, as Judis and Clinton claim, this

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



strategy ratifies insurance companies' dominance of health care. Hence, its endorsement by the leadership of Prudential, Blue Cross and the Health Insurance Association of America (the insurance industry's lobbying group).

Judis' benign view of the German health system is stunningly uninformed. Germany's health statistics are among the worst in Europe, even worse than ours for some measures. The official German cost figures exaggerate the effectiveness of cost containment, since they omit spending for most long-term care which is not covered by the health insurance funds. Moreover, the German system is as administratively complex and costly as ours, their medical technology little better planned and their drug costs even higher. German cost containment has relied on underpaying non-physician health care personnel (whose wages are 60 percent of the society-wide average vs. 90 percent in the U.S.) and employing fewer of them (1.3 per hospital bed in Germany vs. 3.2 in the U.S.).

Unfortunately, Clinton is no friend of progress in health care. The wide mobilization that will be needed to force him to do the right thing is not aided by rosy misportrayals.

David U. Himmelstein, M.D.
Steffie Woolhandler, M.D., MPH
Center for National
Health Program Studies
Harvard University

Follow the money

Jordan Moss' "A taxing question: How to pay for schools?" (*ITT*, Oct. 28) presented what seemed to be a complete and insightful discourse into the education issues and the concerns of all forthright Americans. But for what it did not say, Moss served the conservative cause.

Without exception, all the candidates and their parties, in their acquiescence to making the "economy" the issue, used the fear of taxes, taxes, taxes as something they could attach to the "other guy" and then went about trying to leave the voter with the

soundbite that "I have a plan to keep taxes, taxes, taxes down. No one bothered to remind the electorate that it is taxes, taxes and taxes that pay for schools, libraries, policemen, sanitation, firefighters, roads, hospitals, bridges—in short, the total infrastructure. Although Moss' path was paved with good intentions, his message was a lesson in how it is wisest to juggle our revenues from one place to another in order to make the system work.

But that is not how the system works. Although no candidate had the courage to say so, money is not the problem today and will not be in the future. We have plenty of it—enough for schools and all of the above. More than enough. Where do we get it from? Simple. From where it is going!

The "end" of the Cold War only made the obvious more so. Before, it was only that we chose to spend our taxes (even though the wealthy and corporate America do not pay their fair share, and that should be dealt with) on a war machine of the type that broke the Soviet Union in one way and is breaking us in another. We chose Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, Vietnam and Desert Storm over the infrastructure. It would take the simplest exchange in priorities.

The feds, under the present guidelines, would only use a successful state manipulation that might find more funds for schools as an excuse to send back less to that particular state. We must remember that all the states of the union depend on Washington for a fair cost-sharing exchange. None can do it on its own. Our efforts must be, as Willie Sutton said, to go where the money is.

Don Sloan
New York

Abstruse-packin' mommas

It is depressing to see a journal pretending to profess insightful, progressive views devote a full page to the reactionary mewlings of James Soderholm on "Foul language and the

academic left" (*ITT*, Oct. 28). Not only is the complaint about so-called academic "jargon" a well-known, knee-jerk ploy of the right (cf. Alan Bloom, Dinesh D'Souza, et al.), this position elides ongoing hard work in forums as diverse as Teachers for a Democratic Culture and *Rethinking Marxism*, which do not yield to the double standard espoused by Soderholm: Between the "technical vocabulary [that] researchers use" in advancing toward "verifiable progress" in the sciences and "the technical language written only for other specialists" that he expects "progressive and intellectuals" in social studies and the humanities to eschew.

He and *ITT* would do well to reject the simplistic and condescending stance that excoriates Foucault, Jameson, Spivak and their academic ilk for "having nothing to say to common readers, far less to sad washer-women," or "blithe homeowners and unhappy housewives." Given the political manipulation to which our population is subject on a daily basis, and even in the usually reliable pages of *ITT*, washer-women, homeowners and housewives would do well to pack a little more of the "abstruse language of many modern Marxist critics."

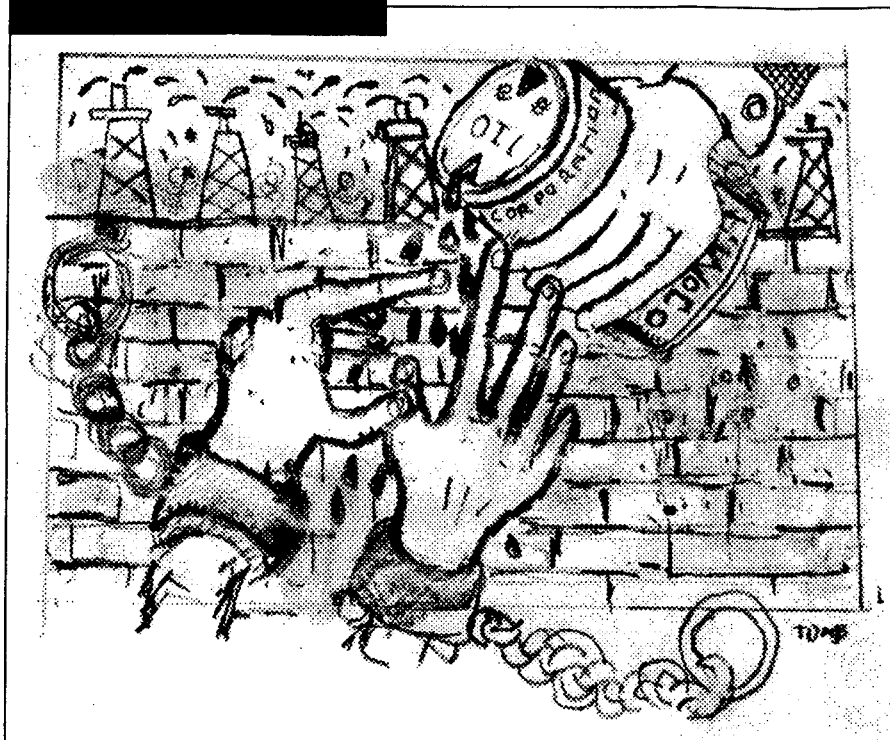
Charles J. Stivale
Wayne State University
Detroit

Correction

"Bill Clinton's cabinet guessing game" (*ITT*, Nov. 11), failed to note that the Japanese government's cabinet predictions were done by Okimoto Associates in Tokyo. In addition, one of Okimoto's predictions for secretary of the interior was former Vermont governor Madeleine Kunin, whose name was misspelled. We regret the errors.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

InSHORT



Thomas Billings

OUT OF BURMA?

The next divestment campaign

League for Democracy (NLD), Burma's rightful ruling party.

The NLD, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and barred from assuming power after winning 81 percent of the vote in Burma's 1990 elections, is asking foreign corporations to end their support of the country's military rulers by taking their business elsewhere. A similar divestment call by South Africa's African National Congress sparked the international anti-apartheid movement that eventually forced the South African government to the bargaining table.

Burma's ruling junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has been condemned by Amnesty International, which is calling for full investigation of all reports of torture, ill-treatment of prisoners and extrajudicial executions.

Such allegations have already prompted Levi Strauss & Co. to pull out of

Should U.S. companies be doing business in Burma? Not unless they support extrajudicial executions, slave labor and mass relocations of a terrorized populace, says the National



By Woody Igou

Erosion continues

REALITY: A recent Sony commercial shows an idyllic



scene with a boy and his parents walking along the edge of the

Grand Canyon. Suddenly, the boy points at a TV set showing the very same canyon scene and shouts, "It's the Grand Canyon!"

RIPOSTE: *Pure appearances, they have the irony of too much reality.* —Jean Baudrillard

Baaa-Boom

REALITY: Irish terrorists bludgeoned a young girl's pet sheep to death and used it in a terrorist bombing. The



five pounds of explosives which were hidden under the dead

sheep exploded, but no casualties were reported.

RIPOSTE: *The day it rained Harris Tweeds.*

Well, pardon my Velveeta!

REALITY: From the *London Ritz Book of Weddings* we receive, with the stiffest of upper lips, the following grave pronouncement: "With some justification, poorer members of society have always considered

they have as much right to celebrate their couplings as their wealthier brethren, but weddings have never been cheap affairs."



RIPOSTE: *Until now.*

Where have all the hedgehogs gone?

REALITY: The British *International Express* reports that Newforge Foods, the makers of Spam, are engaged in a campaign to make Spam a more "upscale" product. The company is aiming its image



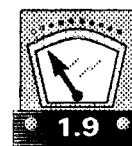
change at "young mothers" and will "underline the message that

Spam is healthy and tasty." The company also feels that "Spam sandwiches can hold their own in the executive boardroom and at smart cocktail parties."

RIPOSTE: *The Queen Mother eats it with a spoon.*

Optioning your mantra

REALITY: The *Chicago Tribune* reports that among the extension classes being



offered at the University of California-Los Angeles campus is "Zen and

the Entertainment Industry Professional."

RIPOSTE: *Screw me on this one and you'll never meditate in this town again!*

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

Burma, which the SLORC has renamed Myanmar. The company recently issued this statement: "Under current circumstances, it is not possible to do business in Myanmar without directly supporting the military government and its pervasive violations of human rights." The trendy clothier Smith and Hawken has also closed up shop.

Other companies have proven more intransigent. Pepsico does business in Burma, despite a boycott call aimed at forcing the company out. And the oil companies Amoco, Texaco, Unocal and Apache have paid the military regime untold millions of dollars for the right to drill for oil in Burma. According to some reports, these companies transport their exploratory drilling equipment on roads the military built for them with forced labor.

The Center for Constitutional Rights in New York wrote Amoco President Laurance Fuller in late October. "Under standard U.S. tort law, each of us, whether a natural person or a corporation, is responsible for the reasonably foreseeable consequences of our actions, even if those consequences involve the actions of a third party," the letter says. "If your [oil] contract with the Burmese military government contributes in a substantial way to ongoing human rights abuses and those abuses are reasonably foreseeable, then you are liable to the victims and their families."

Beth Stephens, a staff lawyer at the Center, tells *In These Times* of an unconfirmed report that Amoco even paid the military government to build roads that were constructed with forced labor. "If Amoco knows that they are using slave labor, under U.S. law, they can be held liable for the deaths or injuries of the laborers," says Stephens.

Amoco spokesman Jim Fair denies that any such case exists. "The suggestion that we were involved in any sort of human rights violation is just absurd," he says. "That is not the way we do business."

—Joel Bleifuss

FLAG WAVING

Does the country need a new pledge of allegiance?

The stars and stripes may dazzle the eye, but they are, after all, only symbols. So when Americans place their hands over their hearts in an oath of fidelity to all that is good and true and

American, Alex Stella wants to make sure their promise is properly directed.

The flag, says Stella of Susquehanna, Pa., "encourages us to form an emotional bond with an artistic design, but it doesn't give us intellectual direction." The Constitution, he says, does.

Though he's not very good with meter, Stella has reworked the pledge of allegiance to help Americans focus their loyalty where it belongs. It goes like this: "Before the flag of the United States of America, I freely pledge allegiance to that nation's Constitution and to the republic founded thereon, one democracy, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Seeking feedback on his new proposal, Stella dashed off some 500 letters to celebrities, politicians and corporate leaders and received about 75 responses.

Columnist James Kilpatrick criticized Stella's creation for lacking "sis, boom, bah," while Mary Kay Ash of Mary Kay Cosmetics called the changes "right on." Folk singer Pete Seeger lauded Stella's efforts, but noted that people can misuse any symbol, be it a flag or a historical document.

Stella says he hopes one of his famous correspondents will take up the cause and raise the debate to a national level. Maybe someone could also help Stella with rhythm. If the new pledge had a better beat, it might have a better chance.

—Glenora Croucher

ABORTION GOSPEL

Black clergy speak out for abortion rights

biases, black members of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) have enlisted the aid of several members of the African-American clergy to speak out more aggressively against restrictions on abortion.

Spurred by the worsening health care crisis in inner-city America as well as a recent Supreme Court decision allowing broad restrictions on abortions, the RCAR's Women of Color Partnership in early fall launched an intensive program to convince black women to become more involved in pro-choice coalitions.

Such involvement is imperative, says Chiquita Smith, president of RCAR's board of directors, because black women are first and foremost affected by restrictions on abortion rights. "African-American women must play a vital role in the struggle to ensure abortion and reproductive health rights for all women," Smith says.

"It is time we demanded that the women of this nation—including the poor women of this nation—not be denied the healing and care they so desperately seek," says the Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, director of the Washington office of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Ivory is one of several prominent black clergy members across the country to heed RCAR's call.

Among them is the Rev. Kenneth Smith, president of the Chicago Theological Seminary. "No legislative or judicial body has the right to interfere with a woman's God-given right to choose," says Smith. "I have never heard anyone say that men should not have freedom over their bodies. When that was said in the past, we called it slavery."

—Salim Muwakkil

NATIONAL WEALTHCARE

When it comes to making money it helps to have some to begin with

assets—received 55 percent of the total increase in household wealth. The share of wealth held by these super-rich families increased in those few years from 26 percent of the national total to 31 percent.

These figures, compiled by New York University economist Edward N. Wolff in a paper published by the Economic Policy Institute, parallel numerous other studies of the increase in inequality of income during the '80s. Wealth is more unequally distributed than income, although growing inequality of incomes is also likely to contribute to growing inequality of wealth, since high-income people can save more.

Yet in the '80s the super-rich gained primarily from a rapid increase in the value of the financial assets they owned, especially unincorporated businesses and commercial real estate, not from increased savings. Although the super-rich own 29 percent of all stock held by households and 41 percent of all bonds, Wolff concludes that "today's very wealthy are largely the 'entrepreneurial rich,' who have made their money through building up their businesses and investing

African-American abortion rights advocates have long blamed clergy-heavy black leadership for their community's widespread anti-abortion biases. In attempts to counter those

You may have known that the super-rich won the financial Super Bowl of the '80s. But only now is the score of the game being revealed.

From 1983 to 1989 the top .5 percent of American families—those who owned \$10 million or more in

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Hillary, take note

When the first lady grants a photo-op to a newspaper, should the newspaper pay for the first lady's makeup? The White House has routinely sent a bill for a make-up artist, and newspapers have routinely paid it, until a *Houston Post* reporter complained. The \$75 charge seemed to the reporter particularly galling in the case of Barbara Bush, whose image is that of a matron who spurns minor vanities.

Perot: the talk show

If Ross Perot ever decides he wants his very own bully pulpit, he could get a talk show contract in record time. But some media types, interviewed in *Electronic Media*, have other ideas. One producer suggests he update the old *Millionaire* series to *Billionaire*, while Perot's paranoia prompts the notion of hosting *I've Got a Secret*. Broadcasters, who got tens of millions of dollars when Perot purchased advertising time, might like talk-show pro Maury Povich's idea best: that Perot simply continue to buy program time to spread his ideas.

Don't ask

Just before the election, the Bush administration played fast and loose with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which requires federal agencies to release government documents to the public. The State Department speeded up FOIA requests about Bill Clinton's trip to Moscow. Meanwhile,

the Department of the Interior appears to have shut down its own FOIA office after a CBS reporter began investigating an employee who had also been a Bush activist. A bipartisan congressional inquiry is exploring the showdown.

Don't say it

Radio shock-jock Howard Stern has the foulest mouth around. But the Federal Communications Commission's \$100,000-plus-and-counting fine on stations that carried his programs over the last four years is an unhealthy last gasp from



Bush regulators. An assertion of the commission's concern with inde-

cency, the fine dramatizes the way in which indecency has remained undefined but punishable.

Quick studies

They used to say we were selling politicians like soap on the airwaves. Then they said campaign commercials were an insult to soap ads. Finally, product marketing is stealing from politics. The Clinton/Gore campaign TV ads used printed messages to focus on issues. Voters, it seemed, were hungry for plain talk. MCI is now happy to oblige, with ads that deliberately echo the Democratic campaign's style. Meanwhile, notes the *Wall Street Journal*, a real estate firm has stolen the ultra-low-budget, down-home look of Perot's ads.

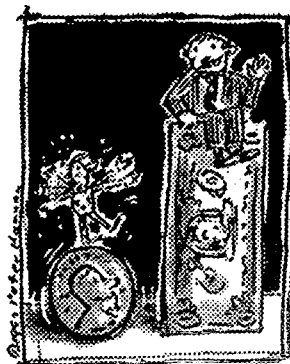
in real estate."

Meanwhile, Wolff reports, "the average wealth holdings of the lower-middle and bottom classes actually declined in real terms." Debt grew sharply, increasing the number of families in the lower ranks with negative net worth—owing more than the value of everything they owned. "Almost 20 percent of all U.S. households had zero or negative net worth, and almost 30 percent had zero or negative financial net worth," Wolff writes. In most cases, lower-income families went into debt simply trying to hold on to an eroding standard of living as their incomes failed to rise or even declined in real terms.

Even more than inequality of income, inequality of wealth concentrates economic power and political influence in the hands of a small group whose decisions about investment shape the future of the country. The vast majority of families have fewer resources to withstand economic shocks or invest in their future, whether it's education for their children, starting a small business or retiring with some security.

Ultimately this accumulation of wealth at the very top may prove toxic to the overall economy. The rapid increases in inequality of wealth in the '80s have only one precedent, Wolff writes, and that's the Roaring '20s. In 1989 the concentration of wealth in the U.S. reached its highest point since 1929, the year of the great stock market crash.

—David Moberg



DANGEROUS CARGO

Clinton should drydock Japanese plutonium shipments

It's too late to stop Japan's first shipment of reprocessed plutonium from France. This floating Chernobyl waiting to happen hit the high seas in early November. But the incoming Clinton administration can take steps

to prevent future shipments of the earth's most toxic substance.

With the stroke of a pen, the new president can abolish Ronald Reagan's 1981 policy of tolerance toward European and Japanese reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel into plutonium for energy use. "You can label plutonium civilian or military, but it can all be used to build bombs," says Steven Dole, research director of the Nuclear Control Institute. "The less of it in circulation the better."

If Clinton alters U.S. policy, he should brace himself for the international nuclear industry to cry foul and invoke the name of Jimmy Carter, whose anti-proliferation stance rankled industry officials. But economic logic and world opinion are on Clinton's side.

Clinton's state department could also rescind a 1988 agreement allowing Japan to reprocess spent nuclear fuel of U.S. origin into plutonium for 30 years. Most other countries must get case-by-case approval. Overturning the agreement unilaterally could spark foreign policy fireworks. But given that many countries have banned Japan's plutonium-laden ship from their territorial waters, quiet diplomacy that gives Japan room to stop reprocessing and save face could make the 1988 agreement's burial a formality.

As Dole says, "The human cancer dose for plutonium is about the size of a pollen speck and it has a half-life of 24,000 years. Decisions we make about plutonium are decisions we make forever."

—Robin Epstein



BITTER HARVEST

Caterpillar chafes Bill Wheat

Peoria is an attractive city of 113,000, perched on the wooded bluffs of the Illinois River. Caterpillar started making tractors here before World War I. Many generations of Peorians have worked in the big plants. This river city still has a comfortable, even prosperous, air, with a lively central business district. Hospital complexes stand as monuments to the health benefits the United Auto Workers Local 974 has won for its members at Caterpillar.

Bill Wheat says that before this year's bitter five-month strike he used to like his job at Caterpillar. An intense man in his early 40s, athletic and youthfully silver-haired, Wheat is the UAW steward at Building LL in East Peoria. At Caterpillar, where he has worked for 22 years, Wheat cuts pieces of plate steel and he shampers (bevels) the edges in pieces that have already been cut, preparing them for the final weld. He is proud that he can cut to a one or two millimeter tolerance, and he emphasizes that the robots that have replaced some jobs could

ETC.

By Glenora Croucher

God and Sex

A little good natured sex never hurt anybody. But a lot of *Sex*? Well, that's another story. When the staid printing giant R.R. Donnelley and Sons agreed to give Madonna's erotic fantasies a roll in the presses, some of the company's more pious customers—several Bible companies—began grumbling about taking their business elsewhere. The day after *Sex* was released one Bible contract vanished in a puff of smoke, and a few others are trying to find ways to pull out too. But the Bible has some spicy stuff in it too. Maybe they should give their product another look.

Trolley folly

Like most urban centers in the U.S., Chicago has been forced to cut service to accommodate a shrinking budget. One victim of the budget ax is the city's mass-transit system, which for the past several years has been steadily hiking fares and dropping routes—angering and inconveniencing millions of riders. The city's mass-transit system expects to operate under a \$24 million deficit next year. But in the face of such problems, Mayor Richard Daley has proposed an entirely new route, at an estimated cost of \$750 million. It's a quaint lakefront trolley that would truck visitors along the short trek from the McCormick Place convention center to the historic (and vacant) Navy

Pier—providing them with a nice view of the downtown skyline and ultimately providing Chicagoans with less citywide transportation. Although tourists will be the city's most likely riders, it will be the city's residents who are really being taken for a ride. (Kurt Gottschalk)

Junk money

How long can a clunky old car last? One, maybe two years. But the pollution it spews into the air can hang around for a lifetime—maybe longer. Even so, folks have a hard time dumping a pollution-mobile if the thing still runs—unless they can make a fast buck off it.

Working on that assumption, the state of Illinois has launched its "Cash for Clunkers" program. In a time-honored tradition, the state basically bribed owners of high-emissions automobiles to get the junkers off the streets. Gov. Jim Edgar handed out checks for \$705 to \$950 for each environmentally unsound automobile—sometimes paying out more than a car was actually worth.

On the surface, the program appears to be a good idea. But there is a hitch. Money for the vehicles was provided by a number of companies including Clark Oil, Amoco, Commonwealth Edison, Abbott Labs and People's Gas.

Although the companies have, so far, received nothing in return for their generous donations, they could pick up a few perks down the road—namely the right to cough some extra pollutants into the air.

There's no such thing as a free lunch.

never do his: "The machine might, for example, not recognize an aluminum bubble in the alloy and cut a bad part."

Wheat and his co-workers call all of Caterpillar's earthmovers "tractors," even the huge D-11s that sell for \$975,000 each. They used to be proud that their tractors were sold all over the world. Caterpillar is America's second-largest exporter, after Boeing. The company, confident of its product quality, guarantees customers it will deliver replacement parts anywhere within 24 hours, even to Siberia, where D-11s work in mines in sub-zero weather.

But Wheat says this year's strike against Caterpillar has killed that pride: "We used to feel that we made the best off-highway vehicles in the world. Now, I just do my job, turn out my parts. But my heart's not in it."

His most deeply felt grievance is not about money, or working hours, or the threatened reduction in health benefits. Nor is it about being fired last summer for leaving his work station to go out to the parking lot to turn off the lights on his car. (Management later backed down and rehired him.) What really bothers Wheat is that when the strike got underway, Caterpillar imported several hundred extra security guards from the Vance Corporation, a Virginia-based outfit that rides shotgun for companies plagued by restless workers. The "Vances" arrived in Peoria, provocatively dressed in paramilitary-style dark overalls. Though that was almost a year ago, Wheat can still hardly contain his anger: "There they were, inside the plant, 'protecting' it from us, people who had worked there for 20 years, and who would still have been working if [Caterpillar chairman Donald] Fites had not provoked the strike."

Peoria is not a big city, and a lot of people all over the Caterpillar structure are related to each other. Wheat and his fellow unionists had sympathizers among the executive secretaries and on the plant security force. Consequently, management was unable to keep anything secret during the strike. But Peoria's relatively small size also means that the bitterness is concentrated, and lingering. Wheat and his friends know the exact number—984 out of a force of 8,600—of workers who crossed the picket lines after Fites threatened to hire permanent replacements. They will not talk to the people they call "scabs" unless the work absolutely requires some communication. Since the strike, Wheat has not spoken to his own brother, who works for management and supports the company's stand.

Wheat is sorry he ever began working for Caterpillar. "I've been a volunteer fireman for years and I've also done paramedic rescue work. What I'd like to have done is been a firefighter on a department in a city somewhere. What I'd like to do now is maybe go out west and work as a park ranger in one of the national forests. I visited my boy when he was playing baseball out in Montana, and one of the rangers told me that with my background as a paramedic I could qualify."

Peoria is not the place it once was. High-wage jobs have been lost or replaced by low-wage ones. Caterpillar, with the help of automation, has cut its Peoria workforce to 9,000, down from 24,000 in 1979. To restore employment in this city and other dying river towns, the state of Illinois legalized riverboat gambling. Peoria billboards tout the Paradise, a paddle-wheel casino that plies the Illinois River as it empties the pockets of 3,000 people a day. It is the same kind of non-productive, tawdry allurements that Third World nations use to woo tourists. But dealing blackjack and serving cocktails may not be enough to save this town. Too many more of these low-paying jobs and Peoria could go the way of industrial carcasses like Flint, Mich., or Homestead, Pa., where stores are abandoned, grass grows in the sidewalks and the homeless haunt once busy streets.

—James North

T H E F I R S T S T O N E

BALANCING ACT

By Joel Bleifuss

To resort to psychobabble, I am emerging from a codependent relationship with the Reagan-Bush era. Come January, I won't have a White House to kick around anymore. Conditioned reflexes will have to be rechannelled. The adjustment may be difficult. My biggest block is a tendency—one I share with many righteous progressives—to be judgmental, to divide the political world into villains and heroes.

In my six years at *In These Times*, I never once worried about being too subjective. Objective reality was Ronald Reagan and George Bush's total venality. The kindest thing that could ever be said about the administrations's policies was that they were wrong. (If you don't believe me, name three positive initiatives taken by Reagan and Bush in the past 12 years. Can't, can you?)

Such rush to judgment will not be possible with the Clinton-Gore administration. The situation is more ambiguous and, for the left, which tends to prefer moral certainty to political ambiguity, therein lies the danger. On one side there is the trap of falling into the optimistic delusion that Clinton-Gore will be hunky-dory. On the other, there is the peril of standing—morally indignant, politically correct—on the sidelines and whining.

Constructive engagement will be a rough path to hew. I called a few people around the country and asked how the prospect of a new morning in Clinton-Gore's America was affecting their political work and outlook.

Barbara Ehrenreich has combed the confetti from her hair. "My work doesn't change in nature," says writer Ehrenreich. "I'll give Clinton about 10 minutes and then I'll be criticizing him. We'll have a very brief honeymoon. It may be over already.

"The challenge for a lot of us on the left is that it didn't take a whole lot of intellect to be critics of Reagan and Bush. Everything was at the Bozo level. This new adminis-

tration is going to require a little bit more in the way of IQ points. I wonder if we still have the brain cells after dealing with presidents who think ketchup is a vegetable."

One bright spot Ehrenreich sees on the political horizon is the formation of the New Party, a third-party attempt modeled on Canada's New Democratic Party. (See "In Person," Nov. 11.) But she believes the left will not give the New Party's well-thought-out strategy the attention it merits until after the honeymoon.

Ralph Nader is holding his breath. "We expect the door to be more open and the administration's ear to be more attentive," he says, "all the while crossing our fingers."

From his Washington office, he has already noted one bad omen. "The lobbyists are circling the new administration," he says. "They probably expect things to be pretty much the same as under Bush except for the judicial appointments. The progressive citizen community has to take the initiative. We just can't sit back and hope the process will come to us."

Lois Gibbs, executive director of Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste, also is keeping an eye on the lobbyists.

"I'm optimistic, but cautiously so," says Gibbs. "I am very fearful of the honeymoon. We had one when [EPA administrator] William Reilly took office and, compared to Clinton and Gore, he was a low-level staff person. Nobody wanted to beat up on him. But I was really hard on Reilly and the mainstream environmental groups called me unprofessional. They said 'Lighten up, Lois. Give him a chance.' But if we had, the only group he would have heard from would have been the Chemical Manufacturers Association. And you can bet that with Clinton and Gore the Chemical Manufacturers Association will turn up the heat in multiples—double their staff, double their money."

Under a Clinton-Gore administration, environmental concerns will move a couple notches up the agenda. Todd Steiner is director of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project at the Earth Island Institute and one of the architects of the save-the-dolphin campaign. He is wary.

"Unfortunately, Clinton is not the person that Bush made him out to be," says Steiner. "We won't have people in charge of agencies that are trying to dismantle the agencies they have been put in charge of. On the other hand, the corporate interests that wield immense power in this country have not changed. It's got to be better under Clinton, but I don't think I can retire yet."

Admiral Gene La Rocque has retired once, from the U.S. Navy. Now he directs the Center for Defense Information, a Washington-based think tank founded by former military officers. He believes his work will pick up.

"Some people think Clinton will become a dove after he is president. I expect just the contrary," says La Rocque, who is gloomy.

"Clinton has supported Bush on everything other than the number of active troops to be cut. And he has a penchant for promising defense contractors that he is going to proceed with weapons purchases unsought by the Pentagon.

"I think he will also demonstrate a penchant for being militant to compensate for his unwillingness to serve in the military or go to Vietnam. His fundamental philosophy is for a rapid deployment force, boldly suggesting a role as the world's policemen."

Robert Bray, spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, is most upbeat about the incoming administration.

"For the first time in the history of this country, lesbians and gays have become part of the governing coalition," says Bray. "On the national level, Clinton has promised to support federal gay and lesbian civil-rights protections. We've elected more pro-gay Congress members and we predict at least 140 co-sponsors of the gay-rights bill, up from 126."

But he's also bracing for a fight. "We anticipate an aggressive backlash against the gains we've made on the national level," says Bray. "The far right will export across the nation the [anti-gay rights] bill passed in Colorado."

Chris Crawley is the executive director of the Milwaukee-based employment policy group, Congress for a Working America. A strong critic of the current welfare system, Crawley believes that with a Clinton administration welfare reform will finally get the attention it deserves.

"The work [on welfare reform] that Clinton has done as governor in Arkansas is so closely tied philosophically to what we're doing here in Milwaukee that we can't help but think that it is going to bode well for us and our work—which translates into an accelerated time line for a federal welfare reform program." Earlier this month Crawley returned to his home state of Arkansas to meet with the state's Department of Human Services. Says Crawley, "They have expressed a strong interest in the specific programming that we have been able to accomplish around the earned income credit and other anti-poverty legislation."

Angela Sanbrano, executive director of CISPES (Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), breathes a sigh of relief at no longer "having a Republican administration that funded and directed the war in El Salvador."

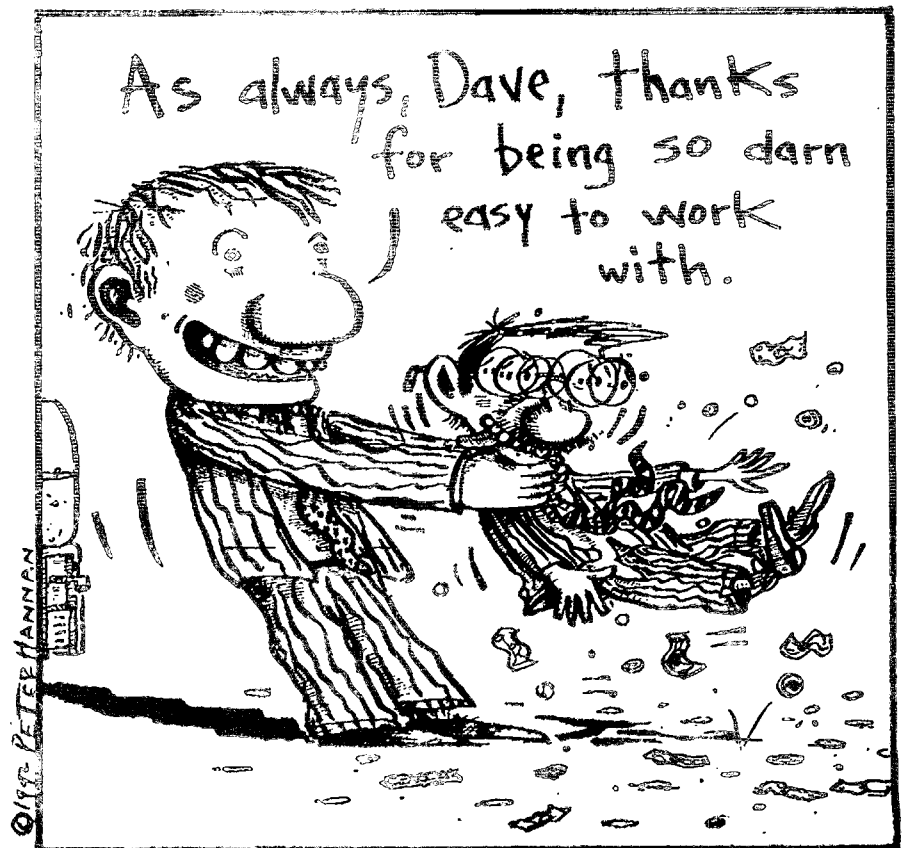
"The Democrats will be more open to supporting the peace process and will not use the threat of force to try to weaken the left in El Salvador," says Sanbrano. "But it won't happen by itself. We will have to continue to pressure Congress and the Democratic leadership so that they put pressure on the State Department and the Salvadoran government to comply with the accords. At this point, the new Clinton administration doesn't seem very interested in foreign policy, so, in that sense, we will have to work harder."

But Sanbrano is happy with the foreign policy interests of Hillary Clinton, who was chair of the board of directors of the New World Foundation when, in 1989, it gave a \$20,000 grant to CISPES.

Gibbs, however, is not so high on the future First Lady. Hillary Clinton refused to meet with mothers in Jacksonville, Ark., who were concerned about a dioxin-contaminated waste site that was poisoning their children. Gibbs suspects Clinton turned down their request for a meeting because the waste-site owners are clients of the law firm at which Clinton is a senior partner.

So should we praise Hillary Clinton or blame her? Neither and both. Same with the future administration. When all is tallied, the Clinton-Gore White House will have pluses and minuses. But at least it will be an administration that factors in the desires of progressive Democrats. Our job is to hold them accountable. ▲

The Adventures of a Huge Mouth by Peter Hannan



P O L I T I C S

Opportunity knocks at Clinton's door

T

his city is usually only half awake in the weeks before Christmas, but this year it is filled with policy wise men bearing gifts for the new Clinton administration. Two stand out to me—Amory Lovins' plan for conserving energy and Paul Starr's proposal for national health insurance. Lovins, the vice president of the Rocky Mountain Institute, has championed the "soft path" in energy for two decades. Starr, a Princeton sociologist, is the co-editor of *The American Prospect* and the author of *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*.

Both proposals would allow Clinton to fulfill his difficult mandate of achieving far-reaching economic change without increasing the size and scope of the federal government. But they do so by running counter to the way many Democrats have designed programs for the last 50

years. They cede power to the states rather than concentrating it in the federal government; they use market incentives rather than mandates or prohibitions to achieve results; and they attempt to build on rather than bypass major social and institutional trends that Democrats have sometimes scorned.

Lovins' and Starr's proposals address economic problems that have vitally affected American competitiveness. Together, they would contribute more to economic well-being than any of the controversial measures that go by the name of industrial policy.

Lovins and Joseph J. Romm recount in an upcoming *Foreign Affairs* article that our nation's failure to reduce energy costs has made it difficult for American industry to compete with Japanese and German companies. Japan and Germany use half as much energy per dollar of gross national product (GNP) as American firms do. Since 1970, oil imports have also accounted for three-fourths of the U.S. trade deficit, amounting to a \$1 trillion transfer of wealth overseas.

One important way to both shrink energy costs and the trade deficit is to reduce oil consumption—two-thirds of which transportation accounts for. To reduce that consumption, many environmentalists and some deficit hawks have recently supported a stiff gasoline tax that would discourage automotive travel and oil consumption. The idea is to reduce imports in the short run and, in the long run, to shift Americans away from car-driven suburbs and back toward more energy-efficient cities. But as Lovins made clear in a press conference in mid-November, he takes a different tack.

Lovins has come to accept as a given Americans' romance with the automobile. Consequently, he now embraces market incentives to create more efficient cars. Instead of mandating new auto emissions standards and penalizing companies that don't meet them, Lovins proposes "feebates" that reward car purchasers for every mile-per-gallon their cars exceed an mpg standard and penalize them for falling short of it. In other words, if the standard is 35 mpg and someone buys a guzzler that gets 20 mpg, that person would have to pay a penalty into a general fund—the same fund that would reward buyers of fuel-efficient cars. Lovins' plan could be administered by states—California recently passed a feebate program, but it was vetoed by the Republican governor. The federal role would be to set the mpg standard.

Lovins' plan would not only cut oil consumption, but, unlike a gasoline tax, would encourage auto manufacturers to produce more efficient cars. (Japan and Germany have much higher gas prices, but no higher average fuel efficiency than the U.S.) American manufacturers are not ahead in building the current generation of small cars; but, as Lovins pointed out, Americans lead their competitors in designing

The new president should back two proposals that build on rather than bypass major social and institutional trends.

By John B. Judis
WASHINGTON D.C.

"ultra-light" supercars. One GM prototype produced last year was able to carry four adults across the country on 29 gallons of gas.

Lovins' feebates are more politically acceptable than a gas tax or mandatory fuel-efficiency standards. Because they don't penalize travel, Lovins' feebates would not alienate car-dependent Westerners. With a minimum of strife, they could be implemented by the incoming Clinton administration and, within a year, would begin to pay off in lower energy costs.

It's even more imperative that the Clinton administration come up with a solution for rising health care costs, which are threatening both our competitiveness and our standard

of living. Business spending on health benefits nationally moved from 8.4 percent of pre-tax corporate profits in 1965 to 56.4 percent in 1989. In addition, about 36 million Americans lack any health insurance and another 40 million are underinsured.

Unfortunately, Clinton and the Democrats are deadlocked among three plans: "pay-or-play," in which the employer either pays for the employees' insurance or pays a payroll tax to fund a federal program for the worker to join; a Canadian-style single-payer plan, which is favored by many liberals in Congress; and a managed-competition plan supported by more conservative Democrats.

Starr, who has advised the group trying to draw up



Clinton's health plan, has created a brilliant amalgam of the single-payer and managed-competition plans in a new book titled *The Logic of Health Care Reform*. He wisely rejects "pay-or-play," which not only makes it difficult to control costs, but also puts the average citizen at the mercy of his or her employer's choice of health plans and could potentially create a two-tier system of private and (inferior) public health care.

Starr argues that health planners cannot ignore that most Americans—90 percent in 1990—now buy their health insurance from managed-care plans, ranging from health maintenance organizations (HMOs) to preferred provider plans, in which the insured chooses from a given list of doctors and hospitals. Some of these plans are truly terrible, but HMOs like Kaiser and the Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound have shown that they can radically cut costs as much as 40 percent without reducing the quality of service.

By their nature, HMOs can control costs better than networks of independent doctors and hospitals. HMOs have a vested interest in preventing the oversupply of technology and overspecialization of doctors and in making use of midwives and nurse practitioners. They can also be regulated more easily by state and federal bodies, because instead of charging for each medical service, they charge a flat annual fee per person that covers all medical needs. Trying to regulate the price of services alone ignores physicians and hospitals' penchant for unnecessary and expensive high-tech procedures.

For instance, Arizona a few years ago shifted its Medicaid plan from fee-for-service to HMOs. According to a recent study, this move saved the state over 14 percent in Medicaid costs over four years. The study also found that Arizona's quality of care was better than that of states with traditional programs.

Starr argues that a national health plan should take advantage of HMOs' cost-cutting potential. But unlike more conservative plans that would simply encourage employers to buy insurance from HMOs and other managed-care facilities in the hope that competition would drive down prices, Starr's incorporates two important elements from single-payer plans into his design. Like single-payer proposals, Starr's plan would sever the link between employment and insurance, and would impose an overall limit on health care costs.

Starr endorses a hybrid plan similar to that proposed by California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, who is being tagged as a possible secretary of Health and Human Services. Starr proposes setting up health insurance purchasing corporations (HIPC), staffed by public appointees, that would buy medical coverage from HMOs or other managed-care facilities and from a single pool of fee-for-service doctors and hospitals. Each provider would be required to offer the same comprehensive services and to uphold a set quality standard. Every year the HIPC would offer each state resident a specific number of different health care plans—Starr suggests six—from which they would choose one.

HIPCs would be funded either by state payroll taxes or income taxes and by federal subsidies for welfare recipients. HIPCs would negotiate with HMOs and other providers on an overall cost per patient, adjusting the funding upwards for providers that cater to patients with high risk factors. The HIPC would then fully fund the most cost-efficient of the different providers, so that anyone choosing the lowest cost option would not pay any additional premiums. But someone choosing a higher-cost provider—for instance, fee-for-service—might have to pay an additional monthly fee, not to exceed \$50 a month under Garamendi's plan.

How the HIPCs would work varies from state to state, depending upon how medical services are already organized in each state. In states that have few HMOs, the HIPC might function like a single-payer system, setting annual caps for fee-for-service medicine. But in states like California, Minnesota or Wisconsin, where HMOs abound, the HIPC could use these low-cost providers to set the standard.

What would happen to insurance companies under Starr's plan? The large companies that currently run managed-care systems would most likely survive, although their numbers are few nationwide. But most of the smaller carriers, which are dependent on "cherry-picking" healthy clients, would go under. Fortunately for Starr's plan, the large insurance carriers have considerably more political clout and might back managed competition as the lesser of three evils.

Starr's plan for health reform builds upon the existing medical infrastructure rather than seeking to dismantle or bypass it. It is a decentralized program that preserves some consumer choice. There is an inherent danger: It could create a two-tier system if the low-cost HMOs degenerated into low-cost, low-quality public-style hospitals. But if the plan were administered properly—using Kaiser or Group Health of Puget Sound as the low-cost, high-quality model—it could avoid this pitfall.

And Starr's HMO-based system would meet the threat of spiraling costs better than either pay-or-play or single-payer systems. These systems would be far harder to regulate, and under either of them, Americans could one day suffer a fate similar to today's senior citizens who, because of rocketing costs, now pay a greater proportion of their income for health care than they paid before Medicare, a single-payer system, was passed in 1964.

Starr's managed-competition plan is also the kind of proposal that Clinton could get through Congress and past the formidable health insurance lobby. Like Lovins' plan, Starr's proposal uses what appear like conservative means to achieve long-held liberal ends. And like Lovins' plan, it would not trigger public fears of massive bureaucracy.

Clinton, who once promised a health plan within 100 days but has begun to waver, should go for it—now.

(Those interested in Paul Starr's *The Logic of Health Care Reform* can purchase a copy by calling (800) 765-5889.)

L A B O R

Between Little Rock and a hard place

D

uring the presidential campaign, AFL-CIO press secretary Rex Haresty posted a mock newspaper on his wall with the simple headline, "Just Win, Baby." After a dozen years of job-like suffering under Reagan and Bush, labor finally has a president who will no longer rub salt in their wounds.

*Unions face a
big political
choice in their
approach to
Bill Clinton.*

By David Moberg

Yet this Democratic president will take office with few obligations or even links to the labor movement. Also, many unions hold positions—on issues such as trade and health care—that are at odds with Bill Clinton's. Now the emphasis is on points of agreement, such as a public investment boost for the economy, though even here labor wants more investment and fewer corporate tax breaks than Clinton now favors.

On health care, labor has been divided between single-payer, Canadian-style national health insurance and a "pay-or-play" plan mandating employers to pay for private insurance or a public program. There is no enthusiasm for Clinton's campaign proposal of managed competition among private insurers. Some unions fear managed competition and cost controls could undermine the relatively generous plans they have won over the years. The potential reforms could limit corporate deductibility of insurance premiums or make part of workers' health benefits taxable.

Single-payer advocates, including most of the bigger, more progressive industrial and public worker unions, have decided to push hard to convince Clinton that their plan best realizes his goals. "We're sticking with single payer because we're right," argues Communications Workers research director George Kohl. "Also, to give up on that would narrow the debate so any ultimate compromise would be worse for the people we represent. By maintaining our position, whatever the outcome is, it will be better for us, and we may even prevail."

Likewise, labor leaders seem prepared to press Clinton to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), though some unions want no treaty at all. Militant grass-roots coalitions of labor, environmentalists and human-rights advocates may push union officials to toughen their fight on NAFTA.

Labor faces a big political choice in its approach to Clinton. "Should our attitude be to elect our guy and wait for him to deliver the goods, or do we elect the guy who provides the best terrain to fight for what we want and then organize that fight?" asks Ron Blackwell, assistant to president Jack Sheinkman of the Clothing and Textile Workers. "Our policy is that we can't win anything in Washington unless we have a prairie fire, but lots of people don't agree." Many union officials fear popular mobilizations that they can't control, and despite great strides forward, still are uncomfortable in coalitions with many non-labor organizations.

There's such a backlog of labor-backed legislation that passing pending bills would constitute a great breakthrough. That includes the vetoed family leave bill, which is likely to be sent to Clinton's desk early. Labor is intent on pushing through legislation banning permanent replacement of strikers, which passed the House last year. But there were not enough votes to force a vote in the Senate, even for a weak version that would not have protected strikers who rejected compulsory arbitration.

Other legislation in the pipeline includes a massive reform of occupational safety and health law, whose centerpiece is requiring worker health and safety committees in all

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workplaces. Also, labor may want to index the minimum wage for automatic upwards adjustment, restrict electronic monitoring of workers, reform pensions and wipe out some gratuitously anti-labor executive orders Bush signed this fall. Clinton will push job training, but there will be questions about who is covered and about linking training with real jobs. Unions may want to tighten requirements about notification of plant closings and layoffs: The General Accounting Office will soon report that most people aren't notified because of loopholes and lax enforcement.

Looming in the background is the overall question of labor's role in contemporary American society and in any emerging Clinton economic strategy. Unions have long wanted labor law reform that would give workers a fairer chance to organize unions. But some of the most thoughtful union strategists insist that the issue of labor law must be approached, as Blackwell says, from the standpoint of "How is America working?" and not, "What does labor want?"

In order to win public and Clinton administration support, unions will need to make the case that workers must

have the right to express themselves freely and organize in the workplace both because it is a fundamental democratic right and because it will make America stronger economically. "It's a matter of economic competitiveness, but you also have to talk about democracy and a voice for people," Kohl argues.

One potential sticking point will come over employer-organized quality of worklife and employee participation plans. Their legality is in question in a National Labor Relations Board case, since labor law prohibits employer-assisted unions. Clinton and many of his advisers will be sympathetic to any workplace cooperation.

But unions will argue that in the long run the benefits of cooperation—that is, greater efficiency and quality—can only come if workers have an independent collective voice. They will contend that neither the traditional authoritarian industrial system nor employer-controlled participation unleashes the skill and knowledge that workers now have but are not allowed or inclined to use. The biggest challenge for labor is to convince both Clinton and the public that their growth is for the good of the whole country. ◀



B L A C K A M E R I C A

Keeping Clinton's feet to the fire

W

"If [the president-elect] carries out what he proposed, it would represent significant progress for African-Americans," says one analyst.

By Salim Muwakkil

hen I ask David Bositis if President-elect Bill Clinton's presidential victory is a win for African-Americans, he answers with the title of an old blues song: "Been down so long, looks like up to me."

Although Bositis, a senior researcher at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, is normally less poetic, his folksy assessment captures the feelings of many political organizers concerned over how a Clinton presidency will affect African-Americans. "He can't help but look good when compared to the malicious venality of the Reagan-Bush years," Bositis elaborates.

Although Clinton carefully distanced himself from the rhetoric of his party's left wing, many on that wing now argue that he nonetheless adopted their

agenda. For example, Frank Watkins of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) contends that Clinton's domestic program—putting people to work by rebuilding America's infrastructure, universal health care, full funding for Head Start, universal access to higher education, military cuts—is quite progressive, much of it taken directly from the NRC platform. "We must separate Clinton's political strategy from the substance of his proposals," Watkins says. "If he carries out what he proposed, it would represent significant progress for African-Americans as well as all Americans."

The weekend following the election, the NRC convened a conference to evaluate the results and propose strategies to maximize their influence. The eclectic gathering included advocacy groups and individuals with strong civil-rights credentials as well as newly elected black and Latino officials, union leaders and staff members from the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Watkins says most of the participants expressed a sense of optimism about the Clinton presidency, but their primary focus was the meeting's theme: "Promises made, promises kept." The confer-

ees issued a concluding statement that made clear their intentions to keep Clinton's feet to the fire.

The statement also contained this priority list in descending order of importance: jobs and economic development; health care reform; low-income housing construction; statehood for Washington, D.C.—and a new title (Senator) for Jesse Jackson; education reform; compassionate welfare reform; and a more active Africa policy.

Conference observers say that many groups initially lacked enthusiasm for the D.C. statehood issue, but that Jackson did an excellent job of casting the struggle as one that transcended his personal ambitions. Some observers remarked that Clinton is beholden to Jackson for his relative silence during the campaign.

Thus Watkins predicts the Clinton administration will be especially vulnerable to pressure from the left. He draws a parallel between Clinton's upcoming presidency and that of Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Roosevelt came to office on a balance-the-budget platform, but a coalition of various civil rights and labor groups pushed him into the New Deal."

But other black analysts disagree, arguing that this coalition may have minor influence but that it has no power to push Clinton anywhere. "Without an independent power base, African-Americans will be able to do very little to affect the programs adopted by the Clinton administration," says James Jennings, professor of political science and director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute of the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Jennings, author of several books on black politics, says Clinton's triumph pro-

vides little reason for optimism on big issues like poverty rates and the country's dizzying urban problems. "His wishy-washy response to the L.A. disorders was typical," Jennings notes. "He made some half-hearted mention of enterprise zones."

Jennings adds that African-American organizers made a mistake by bargaining with Clinton for access instead of building an independent political base. "If Clinton finds the political going tough and reneges on his promises, his black backers will be utterly unable to hold him accountable."

Even more troubling to Jennings is the fact that Clinton's foreign-policy positions remain a mystery. "What will Clinton's position be in regards to Haitian immigrants, Somalia, the Sudan, the Middle East?" he asks. "We just don't know. But from what we do know, it seems Clinton is

Will Bill Clinton reach out to African-Americans? staking out positions to the right of George Bush. He's made threatening noises about Cuba and seems less sensitive than Bush to the Palestinians."

Clinton's election sets the stage for a battle within the Democratic Party. While the centrist Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) basks in the glow of its co-founder's victory, the Jacksonian wing is staking its own claim for some of the spoils—both material and ideological. Has Clinton's election sanctified the DLC's conventional wisdom that Democratic success is served best by seeking so-called Reagan Democrats?

The NRC's Watkins argues no, pointing out that the election was won not by the "New Democrats" but by long-time Democrats and disgruntled Republicans. "According to an analysis in the *New York Times*, among Reagan Democrats Clinton did worse in 72 categories than did Michael Dukakis. They didn't go for Clinton, and Ross Perot took equally from both candidates," he says.

But despite these misgivings about the Clinton administration, a sense of hope is palpable. For the first time in 12 long years, the Democrats will occupy the executive seat of power and set the political tone for the country. Let the fight begin. ◀



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COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Daring to care for the caregivers

Improving the inferior child-care system in the United States is hardly a national priority. The few national organizations that lobby on day-care issues speak mostly for employees of child-care centers, not for the one million day-care providers who work out of their homes.

In Rhode Island, low-income home day-care providers are demanding health insurance from the state.

By Robin Epstein
PROVIDENCE, R.I.

Approximately 30 percent of these home day-care providers play a crucial role in helping families get off welfare. They are paid by state and county governments to care for the children of welfare recipients in education and job training programs. They also receive government subsidies to care for children of the working poor.

Child-care workers, who labor in an isolated, back-breaking and woefully underpaid industry, rarely organize. And orga-

nizing is almost unheard of among home day-care providers paid by the government.

But in Providence, R.I., middle-aged black and Latina women who eke out \$8-\$12,000 a year providing day care in their homes for state-subsidized children, are collectively demanding improvements in their working conditions. They belong to a community organization called DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality), a six-year-old group that has helped low-income Providence residents tackle several poverty-related problems.

At the outset, these women were situated about as far from the machinations of political power as is possible in urban America. Through DARE, they have forged an entry point into their community's decision-making process. They began by needling a bureaucracy to pay them on time. Now they are demanding that Rhode Island be the first state to give certified home day-care providers health insurance.

Using tactics that exemplify in-your-face organizing in low-income communities of color, DARE day-care providers aim to solve their small piece of the national health care puzzle.

Five people sitting around a kitchen table dreamed DARE into existence in 1987. The group now has 560 members, most of whom live in South Providence, a racially mixed, poor neighborhood lined with three-story New England clapboard houses known as triple-deckers. Half the members are black; the rest are Latino, white and Asian.

DARE's kitchen-table founders include its executive director, Mark Toney, a half-black, half-Korean Brown University graduate; Mattie Smith, a black retired nurse's aide who was recently one of 10 women nationwide to receive an award for community service that brought her \$5,000 and DARE \$15,000; and Sheila Wilhelm, a white single mother of six biracial kids who receives Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

DARE's many victories have shown members they can hold governmental agencies and corporations accountable for policies that hurt the poor. Because of DARE, Rhode Island has a moratorium on utility shutoffs in winter, the Almacs supermarket no longer sells green meat and worm-infested rice, and playgrounds have been built in place of dangerous vacant lots.

When the state was in fiscal quicksand earlier this year and newly elected Gov. Bruce Sundlun proposed cutting a devastating \$33 million from human services programs, DARE put together a coalition of 85 organizations, including unions, soup kitchens and hospitals, and got 80 percent of the cuts restored.

"DARE is one of the true grass-roots groups in Rhode Island," says Scott Nova, the director of Ocean State



Robin Epstein

Action, an organization that focuses on electoral politics and played a key role in DARE's human services coalition. "DARE brings together real people—as opposed to professional organizers and activists—to make demonstrable change at the local level based on their own self-interest," Nova says. "That kind of work needs to be replicated on a grand scale."

DARE's day-care campaign began in late 1990 after a member told the group her checks from the state always arrived three months late. DARE secretly acquired a list of the 64 certified home providers caring for state-subsidized children in Providence and mailed them invitations to a November meeting. Sixteen showed up.

The women, who were constantly borrowing money or facing eviction while they waited for their paychecks, were furious about their treatment by the state Department of Human Services (DHS). Meeting other home day-care providers who shared their predicament was a revelation. Many joined DARE on the spot.

Following DARE's standard operating procedure, the

providers identified a "target"—Barbara Gianola, DHS chief of the Office of Child Care—and invited her to an "accountability session." At the meeting, the providers fired questions at Gianola.

"I had to answer 'yes' or 'no,'" Gianola recalls. Her responses, which were met with cheers or boos, were then marked down on a scorecard. When she couldn't respond with certainty, DARE members retorted, "Mumbo jumbo, mumbo jumbo!" and marked that down as her answer.

"I was sitting on this chair with no arms and I felt like there was a naked light bulb swinging over my head," Gianola recalls. "But the payment system was a labyrinth of nightmares. It was outmoded, inaccurate and very late."

Following the meeting, the providers' checks came three weeks, rather than three months, late. Still not satisfied, the women planned a DARE "action."

Eva Gomes, a DARE home day-care provider, has cared for hundreds of children in 22 years.

DARE organizer Shannah Kurland scouted out the DHS building and calculated how to avoid the receptionist. On January 31, 1991, 14 DARE members and a gaggle of toddlers trailed by a television camera suddenly appeared at DHS chanting, "What's today? Payday!" Actually, it was six days past payday, and none of the providers had received their checks. They told DHS they would return, armed with more people, if they weren't paid by February 8. Their checks arrived on February 7.

"It set the tone of how DHS was going to respond to the day-care providers who organize through DARE," Kurland says. As many targets have, Gianola eventually became a DARE supporter. "We have mutual respect," she says. "They thank us when we improve, and they force us to look at them as competent people who have a lot to offer."

***DARE is one
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That March, DARE providers insisted the governor live up to his campaign promise to meet with any group that got 20 members to request such a meeting. Although his staff tried to fob them off on an underling, DARE members refused to meet with anyone other than Sundlun.

Eva Gomes, a DARE provider who has cared for hundreds of children in 22 years, chaired the meeting. "That was the first time in my life that I stood in front of a big politician," says Gomes on a recent afternoon as she balances two toddlers and an infant on her lap. "Before DARE I would never have done it." Kurland says that when Sundlun tried to interrupt, Gomes told him he'd have

to raise his hand if he wanted to speak.

DARE kept the pressure on, and by April 1991 DHS was sending checks out in a timely fashion.

After resolving the paycheck problem, DARE providers upped the ante. At a public hearing DHS convened in July 1991 to gather ideas on how to spend a three-year, \$1.9 million federal Child Care and Development Block Grant, DARE demanded \$529,000 go to health insurance for the 184 certified home day-care providers Rhode Island pays to care for poor children. DHS refused, but at DARE's insistence the agency allocated funds for one of the nation's first studies on the feasibility of insuring providers.

"We help the state and they should help us," says Joyce

Jenkins, a DARE provider. Jenkins, like most DARE providers, has no medical coverage. She was hospitalized for 11 days last year and had to go on public assistance during her month-long convalescence. "We should be treated like human beings," she says. "We have a fight on our hands, but we'll put some wood on the fire and they'll give it to us."

DARE's campaign for day-care provider health insurance raises questions about the limitations of the group's strategy. Direct action gives disenfranchised people a way, on a case-by-case basis, to block harmful decisions and elicit favorable ones. But it's less effective at winning them a place at the table where they could question longstanding assumptions and hammer out new policies.

If ambushing civil servants does not yield the desired result, DARE may consider lobbying the legislature. But passing legislation requires "moving away from pressuring a particular target," Kurland says. "You're taking the power you've collectively made and diffusing it."

Toney dismisses the idea that identifying a target might not work at the state or national level, saying groups can buttonhole people in leadership positions in state legislatures, Congress and federal agencies. And if citizens are blocked from the offices of such powerful figures? "They have country clubs," Toney says. "They have favorite places to eat. They have to go home sometime."

Lobbying is difficult for DARE, Kurland says, because only 15 percent of the state's population lives in Providence and a majority of the legislators are from white neighborhoods outside the city. To push through a bill, DARE may have to reach across class and racial barriers.

Toney has discovered over the years that people don't believe a black organizer can teach them anything. "Most of the organizations we deal with are predominantly white," he says, "and I don't believe they listen to me or take my experience seriously."

Ocean State Action's Nova responds, "I'm sure that's true. Mark has never been one for mincing words."

Despite DARE's well-publicized successes and the support it has lent to many groups, its confrontational tactics have not yet been adopted by other progressive groups in Rhode Island.

Toney is ready with an anecdote to underscore this point. "Someone calls up and says, 'We're having a rally on the state house lawn,'" Toney says. "So I ask, 'Why are you doing it outside? They'll look out the window and laugh at you.' Then they tell me it's on a Saturday. I say, 'If you go inside and you go during the week, we'll come.'"

For information about organizing home day-care providers call DARE at (401) 351-6960. Technical assistance and training for grass-roots organizations in low-income communities of color is available from the Center for Third World Organizing, 1218 East 21st St., Oakland, CA 94606, (510) 533-7583.



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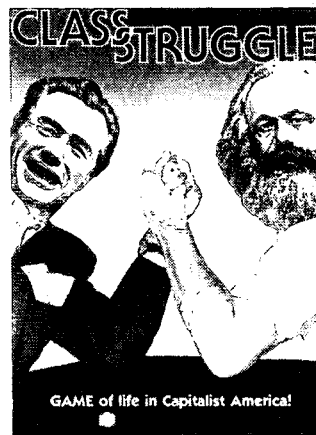
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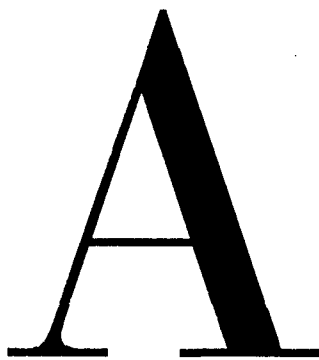
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COMMUNISM

China swerves to the right



Guaranteed jobs, heavily subsidized food and housing, as well as free or nearly free health care are out. Income inequality and economic insecurity are in.

By Grover Grossman
BEIJING

As 2,000 Chinese Communist leaders met last month for their historic 14th National Congress, Sasha Romanov, a young Russian engineer-turned-international-businessman, was sipping coffee in the dining car of the Beijing-Shanghai Express, a bemused expression on his face. Watching the lush and productive gardens of Shanghai's suburban peasants rush past his window, he asked incredulously, "How can this country be run by a communist government? I lived under a communist government, and my country didn't look like this. Everything I see in China is capitalist!"

Romanov, who regularly commutes to China to buy export-quality clothing to sell for U.S. dollars back in Moscow, has a point. Over the past few years, the Chinese government has let markets spring up everywhere. At the same time,

state-owned newspapers and broadcast stations trumpet the old communist virtues of love of party and collective sacrifice, while security police harass or arrest anyone who talks about democracy.

Now, under the guidance and political manipulation of paramount—but unofficial—leader Deng Xiaoping, the 14th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party has officially dumped central planning and state ownership of the means of production. In their place is an open commitment to privatization and free markets.

During a six-day extravaganza of flowers and fountains at Tiananmen Square, China's aging rulers officially elevated the 88-year-old Deng's loosely defined strategy of "socialist market economy" to the level of Marxist theory and "Mao-Zedong thought." China's new government—still officially headed by Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng, but really in the hands of younger and more market-minded technocrats like Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji and

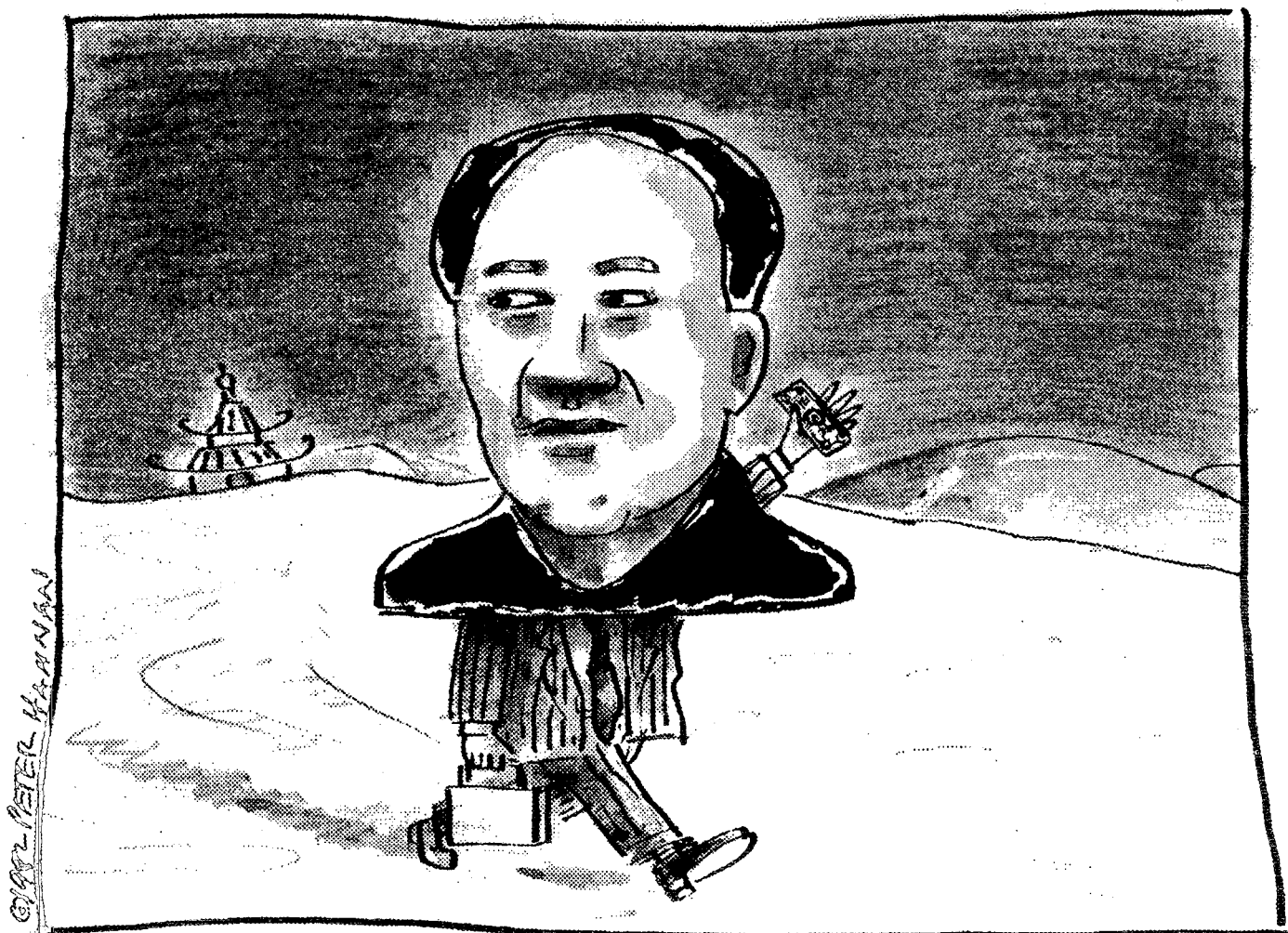
secret police chief Qiu Shi—is now authorized to begin dismantling what remains of a socialist system in China. Guaranteed jobs, heavily subsidized food and housing, free or nearly free health care and guaranteed state pensions are out. Income inequality and economic insecurity are in.

The Congress has eliminated socialism—without admitting it—in order to preserve the Party's power. Its leaders hope to repeat the success of Russia's and Romania's *nomenklatura* in ending communism while retaining power, but sidestep the unpredictable stage of an anti-communist revolution.

A joke going the rounds in Beijing says it all. Three Party leaders are riding in a taxi: a leftist, a rightist and Deng. Coming to a crossroads, the driver looks over his shoulder and asks, "Which way?" The leftist shouts, "Go left!" The rightist counters, "Turn right!" The cabby then asks, "What should I do Uncle Deng?" The old leader fires back, "Signal left and turn right."

Indeed, while promoting capitalist reform of the economy, including an end to state subsidy for all state-owned industry, the Congress also approved a document that called for an increase in international and domestic spying and for an iron hand by the police and the army in repressing the slightest sign of unrest among workers or intellectuals.

The Party, already viewed in China with almost universal cynicism and dislike, has reason to fear for its life. Not only is communism collapsing across Asia and Europe, but China's economic reforms are bound to be painful. To become economically viable, China's giant state enterprises must begin laying off millions of redundant or underemployed workers. And those workers—who expected at least job security in return for their years of starvation wages and



six-day work weeks—are going to be angry.

Although drastic steps must be taken to reform China's inefficient industrial base, the country has no job retraining system. It's not even possible for workers to return to school if they are past student age. Nor can those without jobs legally travel to find work.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of Chinese favor capitalist reforms. Most have piled up significant savings and want to be able to spend their money on quality consumer goods.

And how important is liberty in the new China? For the nation's long-suffering intellectuals and students—now cowed and quiet, but also immensely frustrated by the post-Tiananmen crackdown—it remains an important goal. But they do not believe most Chinese share their dream.

"Nobody cares about politics anymore," explained one student. "Now everyone is trying to get freedom for himself, which means finding a way to earn money."

While this may sound like just what the Party ordered, it could actually doom plans for rapid economic development. Already, some 100,000 of China's best students, caught overseas in 1989, have declined to return home. If the current crop of students shuns academics to pursue a better

financial future, China, already short of experts, will face a severe brain-drain.

Besides, quiescence isn't satisfaction. Students are still angry. At the Beijing Arts Institute, where they designed and built the "Tiananmen Goddess of Liberty" in 1989, a poster advertising John Denver's "Coming Home" China concert tour had been defaced. An arrow pointing at the singer's scratched-off face was followed by, "Watch me die!" Asked to explain the destruction, a student replied, "Denver wrote to Deng and offered to sing for him personally."

A few days after the 14th Congress ended, two strangers in the same first-class sleeping compartment, one a party cadre and the other a joint-venture businessman, were overheard discussing the merits and popularity of the late Chairman Mao. The cadre said, "Mao is not a man to the Chinese people—he's a god."

"Ha!" the businessman laughed derisively. "How can a god make mistakes half the time and still be a god?"

The cadre smiled in embarrassment and dropped his argument. ◀

Grover Grossman is a pseudonym for an American journalist living in Hong Kong.

E D U C A T I O N

Schools as “instructional delivery systems”

C

orporate leaders have recently become pivotal players in school reform. A handful of top Fortune 500 chairmen now play prominent roles in federal education policy. They are active in the Department of Education, the President's Education Policy Advisory Committee and the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC), which underwrites the “redesign” of America's schools.

This small circle of CEOs has also sparked corporate involvement in state and local school reform, through their leadership in such networks as the National Alliance of Business, the Business Roundtable, the American Business Conference and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Their presence in school reform groups around the country assures corporate influence on political, financial and conceptual policies of schools under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Yet despite their extensive involvement in the formation of education policy, we know very little about these key corporate players. Instead, we

know a great deal about a marketeer like Chris Whittle, the flashy promoter of private, for-profit schools. Our ignorance about powerful CEOs of Time-Warner and Philips Electronics, whose companies are bankrolling Whittle, is not accidental. As Ralph Nader observes in *The Big Boys*, “Corporate leaders are as remote to their critics as they are anonymous to the general public. Most ... yearn for anonymity or, at least, for a public profile that is modest and retiring.” Yet given their power and influence in education reform, it pays to ask: Who are these guys? What do they do when they are not promoting school reform?

The key players are almost all CEOs of major multinational corporations. These include the NASDC board's three vice

chairmen, Frank Shrontz of Boeing, Louis Gerstner of RJR Nabisco and James K. Baker of Arvin Industries, as well as Kay Whitmore of Eastman Kodak, Robert Allen of AT&T, Norman Augustine of Martin Marietta, John Clendenin of BellSouth and James Renier of Honeywell. Paul O'Neill, CEO of Alcoa, and John Akers, CEO of IBM, have both served on the President's Education Policy Advisory Committee, and David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox, is now deputy secretary of education. John Sculley, CEO of Apple Computers, is chair of the National Center on Education and the Economy, which has been seminal in shaping both Republican and Democratic federal education policy. As a group, these people are uniquely representative of recent corporate involvement in American education. Together, too, they represent the cutting edge of a brutal new corporate order.

A sizable number of the corporate leaders—Xerox's Kearns, Alcoa's O'Neill, RJR's Gerstner, IBM's Akers, Honeywell's Renier, AT&T's Allen—are credited with vigorously “reinventing” their corporations in recent years, some through a revised corporate culture or moral code, others through an obsession with performance standards, and most through the dismemberment of their companies into discrete business units.

In all cases, this radical reinvention of the corporation has been accomplished through the aggressive deployment of automation technology and through equally aggressive workforce reductions, or downsizing. The companies have been streamlined, made more productive, more technologically sophisticated, more attentive to product quality—but not without a terrible cost in lost jobs and workforce morale. This story is not unfamiliar, but it is important to understand how this scenario has been played out, often with unusual ferocity and abandon, by the corporate leaders on the forefront of educational reform.

Robert Allen, CEO of AT&T, cut 25,000 jobs when he was head of the company's information systems division,

Corporate America is making plans for a “streamlined” educational system.

By Douglas D. Noble

accounting for almost half the total jobs lost since the AT&T breakup in 1984. This self-inflicted decimation of the company continues with Allen now at the helm, resulting in a massive loss of workforce morale.

Allen has turned the company into a series of businesses, allowing him to "isolate the bad ones—and lop them off if they don't improve." The deployment of automation technology has fueled the downsizing of the so-called "Baby Bells" as well, including John Clendenin's BellSouth (owned by an Australian consortium), which has trimmed 5,000 high-salary workers from its workforce since 1985 and is currently seeking to remove 3,000 more management personnel through early-retirement schemes.

Despite its highly touted no-layoff policy, IBM has managed to reduce its workforce by more than 25 percent since 1986, including an estimated 40,000 workers in 1992 alone, mainly through what the company euphemistically calls "management initiated separations." IBM's Akers is modeling his downsizing strategy after the example of an international engineering conglomerate, the Asea Brown Boveri Group, which has a reputation for corporate efficiency through its unsentimental adherence to three principles: "Trim the workforce, optimize globally, and avoid national allegiances." Veteran IBMer Akers, an ex-Navy pilot eager not to oversee the decline of IBM "on his watch," is instead presiding over what has been called a "psychological reign of terror" throughout the company.

These education reform leaders are leaders as well in what *Fortune* magazine calls the "brutally utilitarian" concept of "core staffing," wherein the company retains only a shrinking nucleus of permanent, higher-skilled employees, themselves under the gun of increasingly draconian performance measures. Is this only a temporary response to prolonged recession, intensified competition and inflated bureaucracy—an approach that will eventually ensure a U.S. competitive advantage in the world economy and, with it, new jobs? Unfortunately, no. Growing consensus within the business press is that these changes are permanent, that they augur high unemployment, plunging wages and the final unraveling of the social contract between corporate America and its workforce. This small circle of education reformers is literally on the cutting edge of wholesale corporate dismemberment and societal abandonment.

How, then, are we to make sense of their celebration of education, human resource development and a high-skill workforce? David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox, offers part of the answer. Here's how he explains the origin of his interest in education reform: "At the end of World War II, a Navy cruiser had 1,700 men on it. The average education level required to run the ship was perhaps eighth grade. Today, a cruiser has 700 men and women on it, and the average education level is about two years beyond high school. That's American business. It's exactly the same."

The emphasis for Kearns, then, is on the high-skill performance required of the new, much smaller workforce. An afterthought, apparently, is the plight of the jettisoned thou-

sands. Their only consolation, according to the latest "supply" theory championed by corporate leaders, is that an improvement in their own education and skill levels will magically create new jobs to replace the old ones.

Above all else, these CEOs are obsessed with productivity, technological innovation and competitiveness. Several, including Boeing's Shrontz, IBM's Akers, RJR Nabisco's Gerstner and BellSouth's Clendenin, confront staggering new threats to their corporate advantage. For them, social costs are a distant consideration, and education has meaning only within tight-minded corporate parameters.

Norman Augustine, CEO of defense contractor Martin Marietta and NASDC member, states the point succinctly: "We must accelerate the process of streamlining our society [just as we are] streamlining our economy."

What does this mean for the corporate reinvention of schools? First, their streamlined business strategies stand in fundamental contradiction to any meaningful commitment to educating all American children. Second, the "restructuring" of America's schools, modeled after the "reinvention" of corporations like Xerox and IBM, translates into equally brutal efforts to downsize core staff, contract out services, continuously monitor performance of students and teachers and to increase productivity through technological "instructional delivery systems." One has only to examine recent corporate redesigns of schools, both public and private, to understand the essence of this "reinvention."

These corporate leaders, many from "high technology" firms, are among the most enlightened and sophisticated of U.S. corporate strategists. These are key promoters of "total quality management," of decentralized "high performance" workplaces, of intensive human resource development programs. They are the vanguard in the corporate celebration of "human capital" and "high skill" education, of "putting people first." Judging from their recent corporate records, however, the beneficiaries of this enlightened corporate vision are fewer each day, with no end in sight. Meanwhile, corporate efforts to wring high-skill productivity (or profits) from a "reinvented" school system proceed apace, reminding us daily that "children are our future." It is all too easy to be deceived by such seductive appeals, just as, it appears, some of these corporate leaders have deceived themselves. But the hidden contradictions of this corporate scenario of school reform will not go away. We must pay close attention in the months ahead.

Douglas D. Noble is an assistant professor of education at National-Louis University in Evanston, Ill.

This article is part of a continuing series on education edited by Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The series, "Notes From the Back of the Class," covers a wide range of education-related issues. Contributions from readers are welcome. Manuscripts of no more than 1,000 words should be sent to Alex Molnar c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

DIALOGUE

PROTECT PEOPLE,
NOT STATES

By Robert Schaeffer

The United States should support U.N. intervention in "Yugoslavia," but not to defend the "sovereignty" of successor states or wage a "quick and decisive invasion ... on the scale of Operation Desert Storm," as Paul Hockenos argues ("The Case for Intervention in the Balkans," *In These Times*, Oct. 27). Instead, the international community, led by the NATO nations, should intervene to protect civilian populations, separate combatants and pursue a patient and evenhanded diplomacy. The guiding principle should be to protect people, not irresponsible states.

There are both principled and pragmatic reasons to oppose a massive military intervention to "restore and secure the sovereign borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina," as Hockenos suggests.

As a matter of principle, if one supports the right of self-determination, which in this case means the right of constituent republics to secede from Yugoslavia, and their sovereignty over a given territory, then one cannot support military intervention without infringing on these very "rights." Ask the South Koreans. By admitting U.N. military intervention in 1950, the South Koreans ceded control over their economy, military and social policy to foreign powers. It was better to cede control to the U.N. than to the North Koreans, but decades later, they are still in the process of recovering lost sovereignty. Hockenos admits as much, saying that Bosnia-Herzegovina, and possibly Kosovo and Macedonia, should be placed under a "U.N. protectorate." But this is not a defense of their self-determination or sovereignty—it is a call for their abdication.

The states in the region forfeited any claim to unqualified international support when they unilaterally declared their independence and seceded from Yugoslavia without providing solutions to the predictable problems associated with partition: massive social dislocation of ethnic groups living on the "wrong" side of newly created borders, disenfranchisement of minority and refugee populations and territorial disputes with neighbors. It doesn't make sense to defend the sovereignty of illegitimate governments. But it does make sense to protect the civilians put at risk by their actions.

As a practical matter, too, massive military intervention is a bad idea because armies are not effective peacemakers.

Recall that the Vietnamese army invaded Cambodia in 1979 to rid that country of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (a regime whose capacity for violence greatly exceeded that of the present Serbian government), and, more recently, the Indian army crossed over to Sri Lanka to neutralize a civil war between the Sinhalese government and separatist Tamil rebels. Although the reasons for intervention in both cases were compelling, intervention proved ineffective. The Vietnamese and Indian armies

failed to achieve "quick and decisive" victories and were forced to withdraw, without accomplishing any of their political objectives.

These principled and pragmatic objections to military intervention on behalf of successor states does not mean that the international community should abandon civilian populations to irresponsible or aggressive states. Indeed, the U.S. should support intervention, but of a different kind. The international community should deploy defensive forces to achieve several objectives.

•**Evacuate civilians.** Civilian populations being assaulted by Serbian or Croatian forces are also placed at risk by the Bosnian government, which has refused to remove them from danger because that would weaken their own territorial claims and reduce world concern for the plight of besieged civilians. In effect, civilians are being held hostage by both sides. The primary objective of any humanitarian U.N. intervention should be to evacuate civilians from the front and move them to defensible positions where they can be protected.

Where governments insist on fighting for control of territory, the international community should intervene to protect civilians and, unlike governments in the region, insist on a distinction between civilians and combatants.

•**Separate combatants.** The irregular and military forces now fighting in the region need to be separated. In the past, the U.N. has drawn arbitrary "green lines" in the Kashmir, Israel-Palestine, Lebanon and Cyprus and then deployed U.N. troops to establish demilitarized zones along those

*The aim of
any international
humanitarian
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civilians.*

lines. Bosnia opposes such a de facto setting of new borders, and, in time, people in the region might dismantle these artificial barriers stone by stone or negotiate an end to borders that separate families and obstruct commerce. But in the short run, the U.N. needs to disengage armies and halt the bloodshed.

◦ **Impose sanctions against aggression.** Once civilians are removed from harm's way and combatants are disengaged, economic and political sanctions aimed at irresponsible government behavior and human-rights violations can be given time to work. Make no mistake, sanctions require patience. It took years for sanctions to compel the white government to abandon apartheid in South Africa. Sanctions are inappropriate where there is desperate urgency, as there is now for civilians trapped in Sarajevo. But remove the urgency by evacuating civilians, and sanctions can work.

◦ **Evenhanded diplomacy.** By taking sides with the Croats and Bosnians, the U.N. encourages them to hold out because they think that right and Western might are on their side. But it also makes the Serbs intransigent. To conduct serious negotiations, the U.N. must insist that all governments in the region re-enter the international community *together* (either as one unit or several) or not at all. It should reward neither irresponsibility nor aggression. Having embarked on a course that led to partition and war, these states now must negotiate everything: the rights of displaced civilians and refugees, the rights of minority and majority populations in all successor states, and the territories over which states can exercise their sovereignty.

This too will take time. North and South Koreans, Israelis and Arabs are still negotiating these issues more than 40 years after partition. During the Cold War, great powers reinforced divisions and obstructed opportunities to settle outstanding differences. With the end of the Cold War, perhaps divisions can be healed in a single generation. But the people of these countries must settle their differences themselves.

The Balkan conflict demonstrates the importance of preventative policies that can anticipate, prevent or mitigate the problems associated with the partition of nation-states along



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ethnic lines. The problems in the Balkans are not unique. As the partition of Czechoslovakia and possibly Canada approaches, and the division and subdivision of the Soviet Union and India continues, it is important to advance solutions that have general application. If they cannot be applied elsewhere, and it is difficult to imagine how Desert Storm-type interventions could be successfully applied anywhere, then they are neither practical nor principled.

Robert Schaeffer is the author of *Warpaths: The Politics of Partition*. He is writing a book on separatist movements around the world and teaches sociology at San Jose State University.

**A Croatian soldier
comforts an old
man in Petrinja.**

IN THE ARTS

Not much bite

In Coppola's new vampire flick, it's only the surface that fascinates.

By Pat Dowell

The vampire movie is undergoing one of its periodic comebacks in Hollywood. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Innocent Blood* are already on their way to video resurrection, and Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is the first Christmas movie of 1992 in national release. More of the Undead will rise next year.

Coppola's is the *haute couture* bloodsucker, in which designer Eiko Ishiooka's sumptuous embroidered robes, blood-red armor and diaphanous gowns are far more memorable—and more lively—than most of the actors inside them. It's yet another Coppola production in which decor dominates, and it's not as scary to watch as Stoker's 1897 novel is to read.

Coppola has given the story a more opulent surface than any previous moviemaker. His *Dracula* is

wholly controlled in the studio, inspired by *fin-de-siecle* artists and craftsmen. But it's only the surface—the elaborately detailed drawing rooms and asylums and crypts—that fascinates. The vampire's durability has deeper roots than this movie can find.

James V. Hart's screenplay is, as advertised, by and large faithful to Stoker, with the addition of a semi-historical prologue that constructs the vampire's origins as a fallen defender of the Christian faith. A 15th-century Romanian warrior and nobleman, Vlad, is cursed with vampirism after he revolts against the church when his wife, a suicide, is refused salvation and hallowed burial ground.

Then the story takes up where Stoker began it, 400 years later, with the ultimate decadent aristocrat, played by Gary Oldman, holed up in his putrefying castle in the Borgo Pass. He has ensnared a young English businessman in his plans to emigrate from Transylvania. The ancient Eastern despot is ready to tackle the West, the vigorous young industrial democracy of England, and in particular, its sexually oppressed women.

In an unbuttoned view of Stoker's original fever dream of female sexuality forcibly unleashed, this *Dracula* finds his victims Lucy and Mina (Sadie Frost and Winona Ryder) dreaming of "unspeakable acts of pleasure on the parlor floor" as they page through the x-rated illustrations in a volume of *The Arabian Nights*.

The rejuvenated, dandified *Dracula* (Oldman is far less vivid as a seducer than an obscene old man) is attractive to the women. Arrayed against him are masculinity's best and brightest—the young businessman (who becomes Mina's husband), a doctor, an American Westerner and an English squire—played everyone of them by stiff, especially Keanu Reeves as Mina's intended. The posse's elder statesman and adviser is *Dracula's* nemesis, Van Helsing, a role given to Anthony Hopkins, who would have made a formidable vampire himself.

Stoker's *Dracula* has remained the most famous vampire because he feeds on so many terrors at once. Parasitic and foreign, he's a nativist's nightmare—or dream come true. A literally decaying vestige of the nobility, he reminds the



Bram Stoker's Dracula
Directed by Francis Ford Coppola

bourgeoisie why history passed into their hands. And if the vampire's religious blasphemies had lost some of their power to thrill and chill by 1897, what Dracula did to and for women—commanding them to unholy pleasures outside the control of their husbands and fathers—struck to the heart of Stoker's Victorian readers, who had already encountered the first wave of militant English feminists.

Dracula as demon Jesus, offering his brides eternal life and pleasure for the body rather than the soul, was a panicky male answer to the question Freud ultimately posed: What do women really want?

While other vampire movies over the years have increasingly taken up that question with more ambitious and more powerful heroines, Coppola's Lucy and Mina are merely horny. He must not have noticed that even among the Undead it's the year of the woman. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* revealed what power lurks within the teenage airhead. *Innocent Blood* found a Ms. Dracula capable of cleaning up the town like any John Wayne. (Of course, she has to be a monster to do it.)

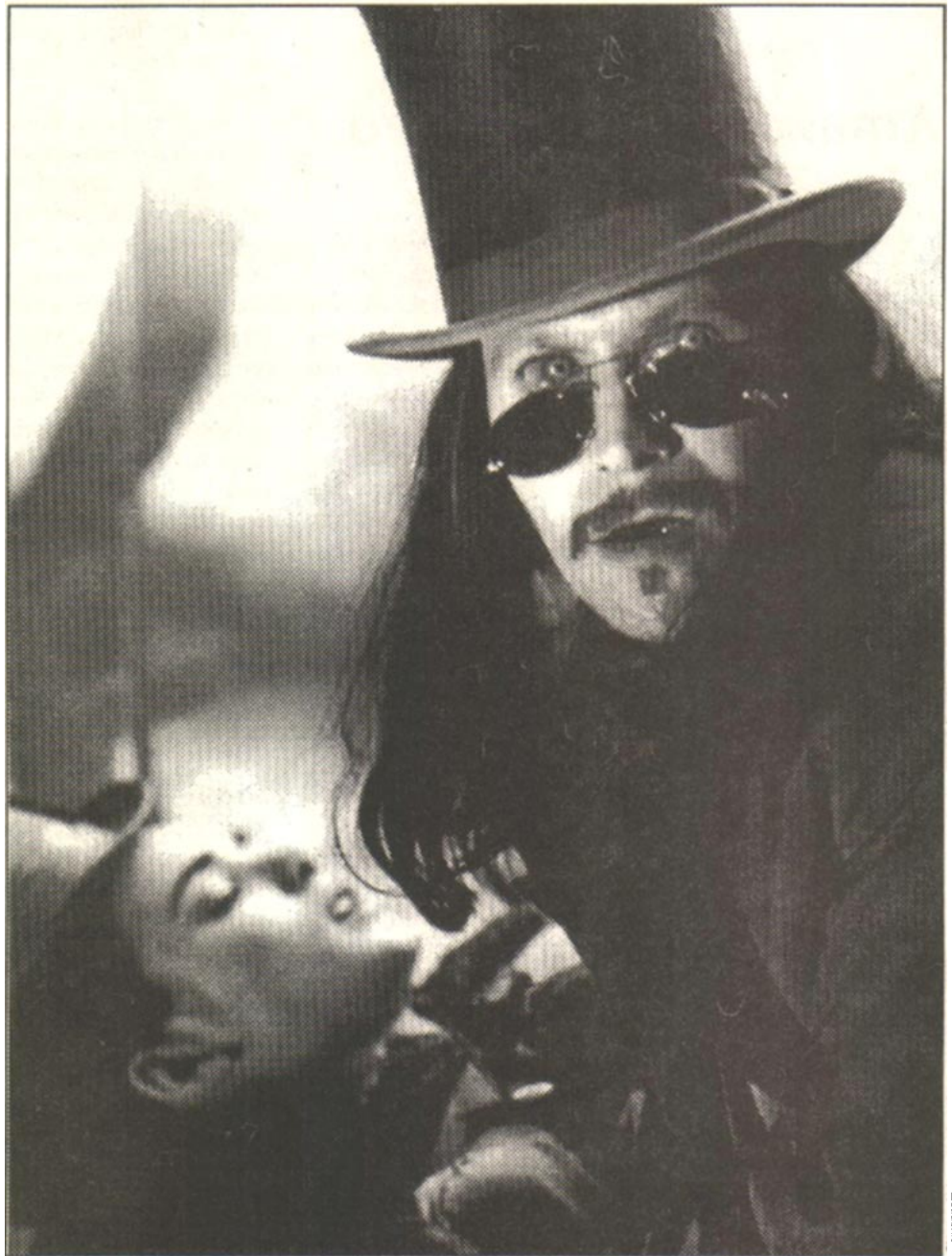
Or perhaps Coppola had other things on his mind. The vampire has always been nourished on its ability to glorify and condemn simultaneously the sexual terms of class warfare, religious warfare and gender warfare. And so Dracula's revival was just a matter of time in the age of HIV and Pat Buchanan's cultural war.

Francis Ford Coppola himself has suggested an analogy between AIDS and the mythic contagion Dracula spreads through blood and sex. Van Helsing the vampire hunter is first seen in the movie in his medical classes chasing down a different invader of human blood, proclaiming to his medical students, "Civilization and syphilization have advanced together."

Coppola doesn't pursue the analogy very far beyond this ripe insinuation about "venereal diseases, diseases of pleasure"—and a few shots of red corpuscles bouncing around under the microscope. Pursued to its logi-

cal absurdity, the analogy is profoundly insulting. It suggests HIV transmission as a predator's attack. Blood-sucking monsters who recruit innocent young people to their obscene and unnatural life(death)style? A group of non-breeders whose perverted sexuality openly defies a condemning church? A preternatural parody of marriage and family values? Is this beginning to sound like junk mail from Pat Robertson?

Bram Stoker's Dracula doesn't explore the possibilities of putting this creature's ancient unholiness to revolutionary new uses. It's too handsomely vague, too busy primping and paying homage to old vampire movies, preoccupied with gorging on the Undead past. Like Dracula himself, it gives only the appearance of life. It's as empty as a tomb. ◀



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I N P R I N T

Amazon reconsidered

By James North

After the Amazonian labor leader/ecologist Chico Mendes was murdered in December 1988, publishers rushed several books about him and the Rubber Tappers Union into print. These works—Andrew Revkin's *The Burning Season* was particularly impressive—seemed to

suggest a neat way to save the rainforest from being burned to the ground. Vast tracts of the forest, called "extractive reserves," should be set aside, in which the tappers could continue to earn their livings in harmony with nature, harvesting rubber latex, nuts and other goods at sustainable levels. The forest would sustain the tappers, who would in turn serve as its guardians.

Now, several years later, a veteran Brazil watcher shows us the much larger complexities that raise questions about this apparently simple solution. Mac Margolis is an American

journalist, but he has been based in Rio de Janeiro for more than a decade. He is fluent in Portuguese, he has worked in the Amazon many times over the years, and he is thoroughly at home in the larger Brazilian society. Margolis has also immersed himself in the literature of frontier-taming in both North America and Europe, and he understands how the West is trying to place conditions on Brazil's use of its resources that it never ever applied to itself. The result is an informed, stimulating, measured and smoothly written book, an indispensable addition

to the growing literature on the Amazon.

Margolis is certainly sympathetic to Chico Mendes, who stands up under scrutiny, in this book and others, and deserves every bit of the international fame that came his way after local landlords in the remote state of Acre directed his murder. But Margolis points out one uncomfortable fact. The rubber tappers have a barely profitable enterprise only because government tariffs protect them from imported and synthetic rubber. On an open market, they would all be put out of business.

Tariffs to protect the existence of specific domestic groups are not unheard of elsewhere in the world, of course. But Brazil is a poor country, and even if the principled and excellent opposition Workers Party came to power, it would have to ask itself painful questions about whether the nation should not import cheaper rubber and use the savings to, say, help build schools in the urban *favelas*, or hillside slums.

Margolis shows how complicated the other issues are. He vividly describes the giant mining and steel mill complex at Carajas in the eastern Amazon as an ecological nightmare, yet Brazil would need steel even if its priorities shifted under a better government than the present elite-dominated, pro-business corruptocracy. He gives us a sympathetic description of some of the several million settlers who have migrated into the region, poor and desperate for land, and he reminds us that they are not unlike the 19th-century pioneers who headed to Nebraska.

None of this is meant to exonerate the Brazilian upper classes, whose refusal to break up the semi-feudal rural estates or to make any improvement in the terribly lopsided distribution of income is the primary cause of the desperate social problems for which the Amazon frontier seems to represent a solution.

But the overall thrust of *The Last New World* is something of a clever, understated but still powerful reproach to the North, even to some of its well-meaning but too narrowly focused ecologists. Those who are zealous about turning the rainforest into a vast, protected arboretum may in the end be right, but they are going to have to consider Brazilian land tenure patterns and minimum wages, issues that are perhaps less exciting than triple-canopy jungles and exotic butterflies.

Margolis persuasively reminds us that Brazil and much of the Third World are being asked to do what the West itself never did: deliberately hesitate at exploiting its national resources in the interest of some larger humanity. At the same time, Brazil is being asked to pay back more than \$100 billion in debt to banks and governments in the industrialized world, money loaned by incompetents to military dictators. The debt repayments have already damaged Brazil's standard of living and helped contribute, as Margolis shows so effectively, to the ecological crisis. It is long past time (as some ecologists have pointed out) to connect the rainforest and the debt.

James North is a regular contributor to *In These Times*.

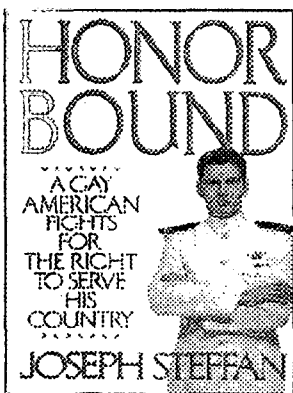


**The Last New World:
The Conquest of the
Amazon Frontier**
By Mac Margolis
Norton, 367 pp., \$22.95

Gay and gung-ho

By Kurt Gottschalk

According to campaign promises, the Clinton White House will soon bring to an end one of the more prominent battles being waged by the gay-rights movement. Clinton has pledged to repeal by executive order the 50-year-old ban on homosexuals serving in the military.



Honor Bound: A Gay American Fights for the Right to Serve His Country
By Joseph Steffan
Villard Books, 245 pp., \$22.50

In recent months, the Pentagon's handling of sexual issues has come under increased public scrutiny, due in part to disclosure of the Tailhook scandal, in which female Naval officers were gang-groped and disrobed by their male counterparts as they returned to their hotel rooms. The military's discharge of homosexuals such as Keith Meinhold, Tracy Thorne and Tom Paniccia has also gained widespread attention.

The ban, introduced shortly after World War II, has been upheld under several challenges, most significantly that of Leonard Matlovich in the late '70s. More recently, former Annapolis midshipman Joseph Steffan filed suit against the

Defense Department, undertaking a considerable publicity campaign to call attention to the policy.

Steffan's four-year battle against the Navy, demanding that the policy be reversed and that he be allowed to graduate from Annapolis and continue his military career, is recounted in his memoir, *Honor Bound: A Gay American Fights for the Right to Serve His Country*. Steffan was an ideal candidate to challenge the ban: Recognized as "officer material" by his instructors, Steffan had direct responsibility over 800 classmates, and even sang the national anthem in two nationally televised Army/Navy football games. Additionally, Steffan was not released for any reported behavior. Superiors called him in for questioning after hearing rumors

about his sexuality. And because of the honor concept at Annapolis—in which a midshipman is bound not to lie, cheat or steal—Steffan answered truthfully. It was for the mere admission of his sexual orientation that Steffan was forced to resign.

Honor Bound recounts, from childhood through his eventual lawsuit, Steffan's struggles with high ambitions, a distant father and coming to terms with his own sexuality. The story of Joe Steffan's coming of age is so good it could only be true—growing up in a small Minnesota town, listening to "Chariots of Fire" on his Walkman during track meets, all the while yearning for his father's approval. As such, the first half of the book, painting our hero as a red-blooded, God-fearing queer, is somewhat overdone. The fanfare and fireworks of a local gay making good would stand as only a mildly inspiring TV movie.

It's not until Steffan's realization that he is homosexual, and the almost immediate Annapolis investigation, that the book stakes its ground. In the end, *Honor Bound* is the story of a career-bound Navy man who was almost entirely unfamiliar with gay culture or politics and seems to have had little political agenda of his own—at least prior to taking on the Defense Department. "When I went to the Naval Academy, I went with a reason," Steffan explained in an interview with *In These Times*. "I do have a basic desire to serve. Clearly, I wouldn't be the only gay person in the military. So many people have come out, even in this atmosphere, and I think many more would, once they were secure that they wouldn't be discharged."

His wide-eyed approach to the military, his sincere shock that such discrimination exists within the armed forces, is both a strength and a weakness in the book. What Steffan *hasn't* written is a book about how the Pentagon ban is symptomatic of the repressive sexuality of this country, or about the systemic inequities and discrimination within the military. Instead, what he has written is an honest account of a successful white male who had thought little about prejudice and certainly never expected to find himself brought down by such biases. It is within this context that Steffan tells his experiences of military homophobia: a gay officer who spreads rumors about the enlisted men who reject his advances, an officer who offers to do all he can to stop the discharge proceedings if Steffan will "accept Jesus as [a] personal savior and renounce ... homosexuality," and so on. He approaches his own investigation as "regular Army" as he can, questioning the policy while showing what he seems to consider a necessary level of respect to his superiors. At no point does Steffan really consider the military's history of overtly racist and sexist policies into which the policy against homosexuality fits.

The book reminds us how infuriated we should be about legitimized discrimination by the government, but it offers little else. Writing about a major issue within one of the most important civil-rights struggles in America today leaves so much room for analysis that, in the end, Steffan's book is a mildly interesting memoir, but politically only a sidelight. ◀

Mexican pop lit

By Ilan Stavans

A fascinating reversal of fortune has been taking place in Mexican letters in the last few years. Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz, the country's "official" literati and the nation's two most internationally revered writers, continue to command command the literary stage. But Mexican readers prefer less sophisticated, less pedantic, more vivid narratives by popular authors such as Paco Ignacio Taibo II, author of *Some Clouds* (Viking, 1992) and the person responsible for the revival of the detective genre in

Latin America, and Angeles Mastretta, author of *Mexican Bolero* (Viking, 1989), a novel about crime and corruption in national and state politics as perceived by wives of prominent governors and ministers.

Each of these popular authors often sells more copies of a single title than any book by Fuentes or Paz. But by refusing to be attached to high-brow culture, they receive far less government-controlled media attention.

Laura Esquivel is also an indispensable part of Mexico's pop lit. Born in 1950, her narrative debut, *Like Water for Chocolate*, which she published at the age of 39, has been a steady best-seller for over three years. A film adaptation, directed by her husband Alfonso Arau



Like Water for Chocolate: a Novel in Monthly Installments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies
By Laura Esquivel
Doubleday, 346 pp., \$17.50

(responsible for movies such as *Mojado Power*, a political satire about Hispanics in the United States) not only has been a huge financial success, it also received a handful of Ariels, Mexico's prestigious cinema awards. (Miramax will distribute the film in the U.S. in early 1993.) Translations to many languages have quickly flourished and reprints of the book in Spain and elsewhere in the Hispanic world are now available.

Set at the turn of the century near the northern city of

Piedras Negras, across the border from San Antonio, the novel chronicles the lives of Tita De la Garza, a peasant gourmet, and her relatives (including the grandniece who serves as the novel's anonymous narrator) as well as family friends. Every one of the volume's 12 chapters is accompanied by a recipe, such as Christmas rolls, quail in rose petal sauce, ox-tail soup and beans with chile Tezcucana-style.

Tita details how to properly mix the ingredients, which is what she does most of the time, if only to cope with the depressing events (including the marriage of her true love to her sister) that threaten to destroy her. Consequently, *Like Water for Chocolate* emerges as a sensual, one-of-a-kind novel that uses the kitchen as the stage on which all womanly affairs shape up—a challenge to Mexico's macho-oriented society.

Its structure and theme are not unlike those of radio and TV soap operas—Mexicans' favorite pastime. Esquivel's naturalistic novel is melodramatic, full of cartoonish characters and easy-to-recognize girl-loves-boy romantic scenes. It portrays fate as the sole orchestrator of human affairs. The De la Garza family members are not conflicted creatures, fragile ponderers of moral issues; they are stereotypes: the lover, the innocent bride, the rigid matron, the harassed woman.

At its best, *Like Water for Chocolate* is engaging and affectionate, full of the pathos one finds in Honoré de Balzac. It is everything but grandiose and pompous. The story is concerned not with historical events (although soldiers and agitators of the socialist revolution make a guest appearance) but with minute, marginal lives.

The Latin American literary boom that gained international attention during the '60s and '70s was made of a handful of male names. Not until Isabel Allende, niece of Chile's murdered president Salvador Allende, published her best-seller, *The House of the Spirits* (Knopf, 1985), did a woman enter the proud ranks of this camaraderie. After Allende's success, a number of novels by female authors from across the Rio Grande were also translated into English. So far, few have acquired the prestige of their male colleagues.

Now comes Esquivel, whose art seems to emerge from the roots of folklore and tradition. She is not an arresting stylist (nor, in fact, does her prose benefit from the English translation by Carol and Thomas Christensen). She writes in simple, uncomplicated words, accessible to uneducated readers.

What's most intriguing about her novel is how it illustrates Mexico's popular taste. Like Angeles Mastretta's *Mexican Bolero*, it centers around domestic affairs. Its characters love, cry, fight and die without thinking of what foreigners might say. They have little patience with government policies. What they really want is to be left alone. ◀

Ilan Stavans, a Mexican novelist and critic, is author of *Imagining Columbus: The Literary Voyage* (Twayne) and co-editor of *Growing Up Latino: Memoirs and Stories* (Houghton Mifflin). He lives in Manhattan.

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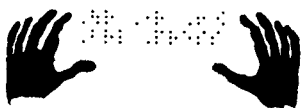
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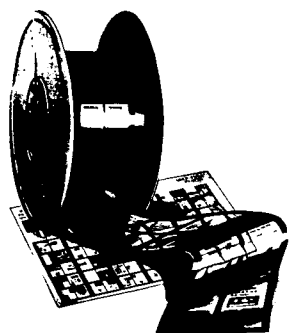
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Continued from back page

when they heard it in that dang Warren Commission report. 101 in ballistics is you can't take a foreign rifle and make it perform circus tricks. You can't squeeze three cartridge shots into five and a half seconds any more than you can squeeze an elephant into a snakeskin. Especially if it's all ears. Lee Harvey Oswald couldn't sell a swamp to an alligator, much less conduct a precision operation. And that magic bullet of theirs did more traveling in the president's limousine than I did in this whole campaign.

This is not silly putty, folks. If you decide you're dumb like I am and you call the Who's Who of folks who've been around it, you'll see this is one sick operation. The Warren Commission powdered and burped those boys.

I called the finest, biggest, whitest men in my new company, United We Fall, into my bunker and said, "We know who's behind this. Number One, on November 1, 1963, the CIA murders Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. Number two, on November 22, 1963, Madame Nhu was in the United States. Pretty simple, folks. My guard dog nipped a souvenir off one a couple years later in my own back yard. But if you want to pluck a chicken, you have to go right to the coup."

Remind you, my men haven't seen *Rambo* in a good eight years, but they're with me all the way. "This is not the Cambodian Olympics with grass skirts and Mai-tais," I told them. "Those flaming arrows are coming at you. This is ugly, sweaty, foreign work. You'll be swinging through jungles and walking up rivers. They've got leeches that can drain you faster than an oil change. And little spiny fish that swim up your wee-wee. And if I catch any facial hair developing, you're fired. Which one

of you is going to do it?" You know what they all said? That's right. The American people are doers, not talkers.

You can see their story on ABC on Friday night at 10:30, on CBS Sunday morning at 11:00 and on ESPN all day Monday. But for now, I have bought the president's brain, and I will put it on the table for the American people. If you want to step up to the plate and take a whiff, that's your responsibility. I'm just a cur dog who will stick to Alpo.

But we discovered this story has more twists in it than my nose got from breaking wild horses as a boy. I find it fascinating that young George Bush named his company "Zapata Petroleum" and then the CIA named its Bay of Pigs invasion "Operation Zapata." It even named two invasion ships "Barbara" and "Houston." Folks, that's pennies on the dollar compared to having to kill Kennedy yourself. The day after he died the FBI briefed George Bush in Houston. In 1975, President Gerald Ford, one of the slow polkas on the Warren Commission, made Bush head of the CIA. And last year, Arlen Specter, magic bullet man, helped him get his Supreme Court nominee. Put it all in a blender, American people.

Barbara Bush is Madame Nhu. It's just that simple. ◀ H. Ross Perot is not who he appears to be. Perot and regular *In These Times* contributor Will Nixon have never been seen in the same place at the same time. Draw your own conclusions.

C A L E N D A R

► NEW YORK

Thurs., Dec. 3—8:00 p.m. Discussion: Labor Faces the Global Economy, Ron Blackwell and Don Rojas; \$5.

Fri., Dec. 4—Sun., Dec. 6, Workshop: Education for Liberation: A Workshop in the Paulo Freire Methodology, with Brazilian Worker's Party activists Eleonora and Joao-Paulo Castano Ferreira (Dec. 4—7:00 p.m., public lecture, Introduction to the Paulo Freire Method; \$5.); tuition: \$50 suggested (write or call for more information).

Tues., Dec. 8—8:00 p.m., Panel discussion: Organizing for Health Care for the People, Marilyn Clement, Beth Harding, Nancy McKenzie and Karen Olson; \$5.

Thurs., Dec. 10—8:00 p.m. Lecture: Russia Update, Boris Kagarlitsky, \$10.

Thurs., Dec. 10—8:00 p.m. Lecture: A Brave New Eugenics: The Corporate Manipulation of Genetics, Stuart Newman; \$5.

Fri., Dec. 11—Sun., Dec. 13 Seminar: East Europe: A New Third World? Boris Kagarlitsky (write or call for more information).

The Fall term ends with a closing party

at 3:00 p.m. on Sun., Dec. 13. Brazilian Worker's Party activists Eleonora and Joao-Paulo Castano Ferreira will be on hand to lead a workshop in the use of hand puppets to create and perform stories about classroom environments and relationships.

For a complete catalog describing all events, write to the New York Marxist School, 79 Leonard St., New York, NY 10013, or call (212) 914-0332.

► WASHINGTON, D.C. March 26-29, 1993

The National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides will be holding its National Pesticide Forum—The Fruits of Our Labor: Safe Food and Sustainable Agriculture—in Alexandria, VA. The Forum, which brings together interested individuals and experts concerned with critical pesticide problems, will focus on food and agriculture issues, as well as covering pesticide poisoning, farm worker issues, legislation, and more. For more information, please contact NCAMP at 701 E Street SE, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20003, or call (202) 543-5450.

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I N T H E E N D



A giant sucking sound entered the president's brain, heading south. His dance card was over. I was a young businessman in Dallas at the time, having more fun than a tick on a bloodhound with my new company, EDS, on our first job with Frito-Lay. We had fantastic people who loved to work around the clock in crew cuts, but I said, this is a national tragedy, folks, let's take an hour off and go down to Dealey Plaza and catch that nut case.

A couple of us were Naval Academy graduates, and Tom had sold encyclopedias door to door in neighborhoods that didn't even have doors, so we had just about all we needed. Tom rode shotgun with the flip chart and the pointer, while I monitored the police lines. But those tweedledees and tweedledums in blue uniforms were so



busy letting everyone scamper away like cockroaches in a sun parlor that we quit after an hour and went back to the office to become millionaires.

Now, anybody that knows me knows I'm results-oriented, but a few things came up over the years that kept me from tying this one up. And the former president was never one of my favorites, not the way he waved his pickle around like it was for public consumption. I'd have fired him for less. But the American people would not let this dog lie. They knew Lawrence Welk music

Continued on page 39

Who Shot JFK

By H. Ross Perot